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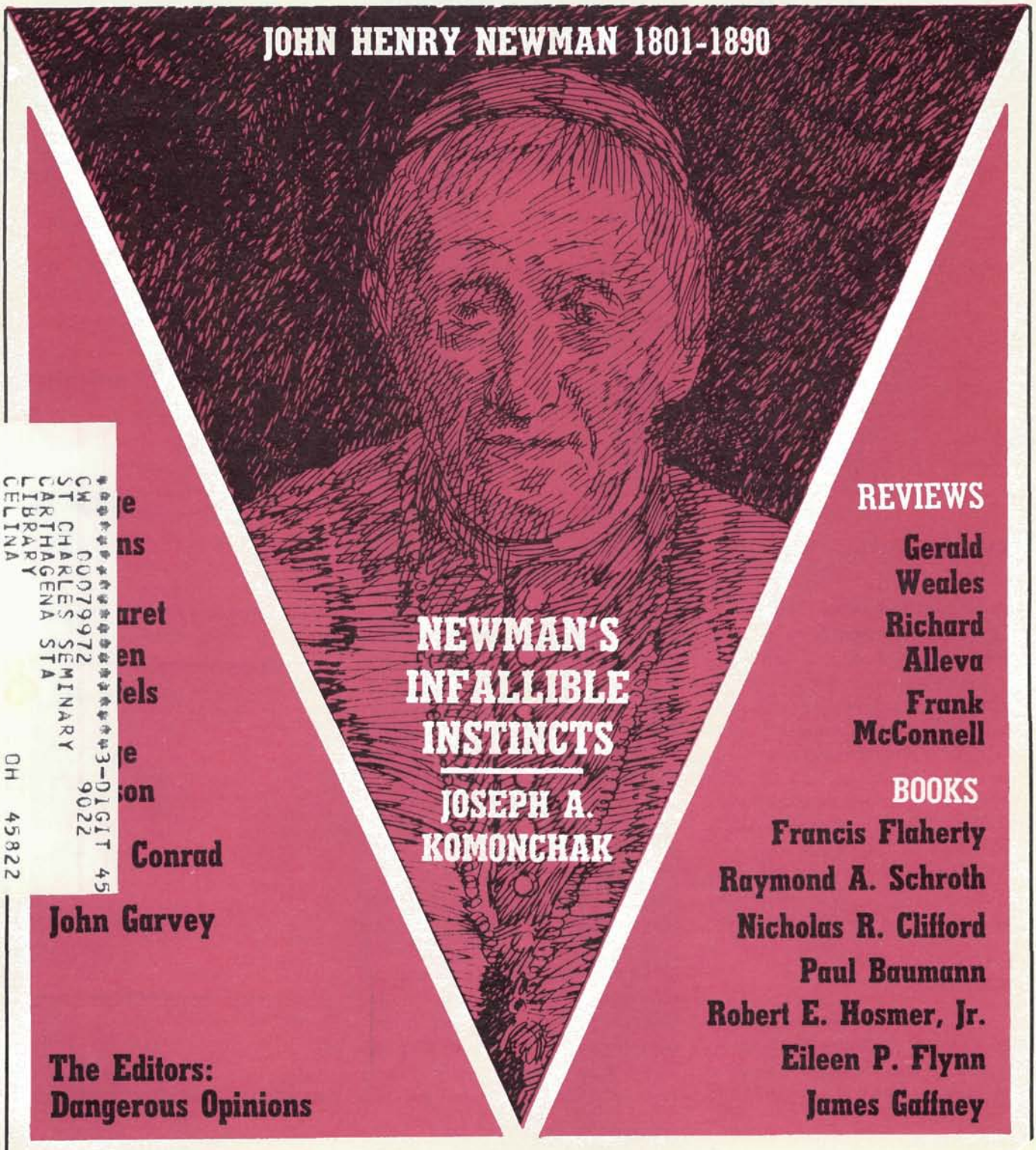

NEWMAN'S INFALLIBLE INSTINCTS

JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK

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John Garvey

The Editors:
Dangerous Opinions

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Gerald Weales
Richard Alleva
Frank McConnell

BOOKS
Francis Flaherty
Raymond A. Schroth
Nicholas R. Clifford
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CORRESPONDENCE

Credit where due

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: I was heartened to read Paul Baumann's intelligent and hopeful analysis of the recently adopted Connecticut abortion legislation [June 15]. I was pleased, too, that he gave his approval to the notion that conscientious Catholic legislators often have to pursue an incremental approach to the protection of human life, and can do so without compromising their religious principles. Mr. Baumann was kind enough to credit me with having contributed to the development of such a strategy. I would like to point out, however, that the article from which he quoted was a *co-authored* piece in *Newsday*, in which George Weigel, the president of the Washington-based Ethics and Public Policy Center, and I joined forces in proposing six principles for the guidance of Catholic politicians on this most controversial and difficult of public issues. MARY ANN GLENDON

The writer is professor of law at Harvard University.

Thanks, but...

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: While I thank *Commonweal* for its generous comments on my ideas ["The Passion of Teachers," April 20], I seem to have misled your interviewer about my attitudes toward civic and cultural traditions and academic learning in general. Frankly, those thing are vital, and I would never dream of building a curriculum that "revolves around the mercurial interests of students." What my proposals really argue is that these things can be drawn from the texts of real life far more efficiently than from the hollow cocoons we call classrooms. JOHN TAYLOR GATTO

Soul food

Chestnut Hill, Mass.

To the Editors: A word of gratitude for two little gems of spirituality that have appeared in recent issues: Paul Wilkes's "An Honest Day's Work" [May 18] and Peggy Rosenthal's "Liturgy and Lawns" [June 15]. Such pieces make *Commonweal* a review that nourishes the spirit, even as it stretches the mind.

(REV.) ROBERT P. IMBELLI

Rave for a review

Potsdam, N.Y.

To the Editors: I hope you'll invite Madeline Marget to write more book reviews for you and that she'll accept. Her review of *The Message to the Planet* [May 18] reconciles what I'd supposed Murdoch made irreconcilable: Marget nourishes the person lucky enough to have read the book and also informs the prospective reader what to anticipate in a way that does justice. Her own rhetoric, like Murdoch's, strikes bright, gracefully arcing sparks without subjective distraction, her estimates of flaws are fair, she avoids the trap of over-synopsizing, and her final admission of puzzlement as to the book's precise meaning is refreshingly honest. Thanks for the best review of the book I've come across.

DONALD PURCELL

Middle East ferment

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Margaret O'Brien Steinfels's "Report on Israel" [May 4] performs a valuable service by recognizing the small but significant steps that Israelis and Palestinians are making toward peace.

She correctly notes the "subtle and intense" dialogue between the warring parties. But to say that "none of these conversations could have taken place in the United States" creates a mistaken impression. In the U.S. there are not only intense private conversations about the challenges of making peace, but also international conferences. A year ago at Columbia University, "The Road to Peace," a gathering of Israelis and Palestinians, stimulated days of dialogue and debate. In February 1990, "The Convocation for Peace in the Middle East" brought similar peacemakers to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

According to the recent survey by Professor Steven M. Cohen of Queens College, the most detailed of its kind, a solid majority of American Jewish leaders support such positions as conditional negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization and trading land for peace. American Jews are joining in unprecedented numbers to speak for a just, lasting, and peaceful settlement of the disputes between Israelis and Palestinians. My own organization, Americans for Peace Now, welcomes all, whatever their religious or ethnic background, who want to join us. Our national headquarters is at 27 West 20th St., N.Y. 10011; (212) 645-6262.

ROBERT W. SNYDER

Journalists & junkets

East Hampton, N.Y.

To the Editors: It goes without saying that Margaret O'Brien Steinfels is an honest and honorable person whose opinion and written views cannot be "bought" with a lunch, a Mercedes, or a trip to Israel. Still, I was startled to see that her trip to Israel was "sponsored" (i.e., paid for?) by Israeli-related organizations.

(Continued on page 468)

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COMMONWEAL 65

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Dangerous opinions

It is tempting to pass over in silence the recent statement on theologians and dissent by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Declarations by the Congregation tend to follow a certain pattern, and the "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" is no exception. There are positive statements that deserve applause, puzzlers that beg for clarification, admonitions that prompt self-scrutiny, and assertions that demand vigorous criticism.

But the overall message, once more, is disheartening. While claiming to honor theology as a vocation, the Instruction betrays a deep distrust of theologians; they are recast as, at best, supercatechists or, at worst, mouthpieces for whatever curial theology is in place. More surprising, while seeming to uphold the role of bishop, the instruction would in practice reduce it to that of a beadle, a sort of ecclesiastical sergeant-at-arms. Many whose lives are the life of the church—pastors, theologians, teachers, women and men—have been deeply dispirited by the Instruction, and we feel a scruple that rehearsing familiar lines of criticism may only add to a demoralization that is becoming one of the most serious problems in today's church.

Perhaps some similar sympathy has led several leading prelates to stress the declaration's positive aspects while minimizing its disciplinary reach. But there are no less plausible readings that have already alarmed even cautious Catholic scholars who have habitually stood apart from the liberal/conservative divisions in the church. And after reading and rereading the Instruction, discussing it among ourselves and with knowledgeable others, we felt a foreboding that ruled out silence.

To begin with, such declarations by this Congregation are no paper tigers; in issuing this one, Cardinal Ratzinger gives himself marching orders, explicitly approved (the document says) by the bishop of Rome, and thus a new source of authority to be cited in support of particular disciplinary actions. More importantly, coming fast upon the announcement of a required profession of faith for theologians and a draft of a universal catechism ignoring Vatican II, the Instruction may be the prelude to further steps that could provoke—we choose our words carefully—forced schism, forced apostasy, or widespread hypocrisy.

That is cause for alarm, for prayer, and for an appeal to that handful of Catholics, above all the bishops, who alone are able to intervene effectively.

Our distress should not prevent us from acknowledging the Instruction's positive side. It recognizes the validity of theology as a "scientific" pursuit. The human sciences and the surrounding culture are described as important instruments for understanding the mysteries of faith. Above all, the Instruction consistently cites a sense of history as a critical tool of theological inquiry. The passage of time and the filtering process of history allow the theologian to distinguish between the necessary and the contingent; here, the development of doctrine is implicitly acknowledged.

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Further, by asking theologians to speak to "magisterial authorities" about personal disagreements with church teaching, the Instruction gives to disagreement some color of legitimacy.

None of these propositions are exceptional and none are new. In the Instruction, however, they are so hedged about that the splendid raiment they once constituted has been reduced to patches on quite another set of clothes. There is a puzzling reference to "God's own infallibility," in which the church is said to share. We are told that "the pastoral task of the magisterium is vigilance"; the task assigned to the Apostles was to preach the good news, a rather different thing. Inch by inch, step by step, the authority of the church is circumscribed and constricted. Words—truth, reason, faith, revelation, the magisterium— become things and are talked about as if they had an existence apart from human culture and the human sciences, human history and, above all, human persons. When we read that "magisterial teaching, by virtue of divine assistance, has a validity beyond its argumentation," or "the fact that the procedures [for investigating theologians] can be improved does not mean that they are contrary to justice and right," we have the sense of drifting into a zone where the rules of discourse are gradually being bent to make official opinion impregnable even to the most reasoned challenge. In the end the authority of Jesus Christ becomes the property, subject to the pope, first of the curial bureaucracy, then of one committee within it: the Congregation itself, author and source of the Instruction.

If only theologians did not insist on confusing things.... Which brings us to "The Problem of Dissent," the Instruction's overriding concern and target, and to the role of the mass media in disseminating dissent.

The Congregation's concerns cannot be dismissed out of hand. The media can be a problem not only for the church, but for politics, the economy, and cultural life generally. Nor are theologians alone in turning to, or being pursued by, the media for help in interpreting and explaining events, and therefore in forming public opinion. Local and world leaders, bankers, artists, marketers, why even bishops, cardinals, and popes use the media—and are used by them. In the U.S., hamhanded or biased media approaches to religious questions keep many responsible and thoughtful Catholics from the TV screen, leaving all the more room for the strident, for dubiously authentic spokespersons who all too happily bolster the media's mischaracterizations and misstatements of religious beliefs and ideas. But the cold hand of the Instruction will only stay the careful and increase the power of the careless.

At a deeper level, the Instruction strives to rebut the justifications that it believes are offered for dissent in the church. Dissent is ascribed to philosophical liberalism and its exaltation of individual judgment, to sociological argumentation for a consensus view of supernatural faith, to the application of democratic practices to the church, to the overvaluation of individual conscience in respect to the magisterium. The first thing distressing about this approach is not its critical stance toward moral relativism and the secular worldview, but its swift and sweeping rejection of what constitutes much of the framework of human consciousness in the twentieth century. The second and more distressing thing about this battery of arguments is that they completely ignore the properly ecclesial reasons for dissent, the concern that the integrity and power of the Gospel are being harmed by error and the whole people of God has, in admittedly a complex way, a role to play in the process of discerning the truth.

The Congregation's way of setting up this argument is deeply revealing. It ascribes dissent to essentially secular rationales, posing them against its own ecclesial concerns. It is unwilling to admit that authentic ecclesial commitment and loyalty may lie behind expressions of dissent just as much as behind its own defense of official teaching. The Congregation's conclusion is that in controverted matters theological correction and development can only take place out of hearing of all but a few privileged Catholics. It simply does not examine any of the reasons why this is not only impracticable in today's world but ecclesially undesirable.

A minimalist reading of the document is possible. The strictures against disagreement with established teaching will not, it is assumed, apply to scholarly literature, although how such disagreement is then to be kept out of the media is left unexplained. (The Instruction's failure to deal explicitly with this point is either a calculated ambiguity or an indication of a gap between its authors' world and the one many Catholics inhabit.) On this reading, the document will apply only to those with canonical mandates—seminary professors and faculty in pontifical institutes. Even so, we see difficulties. It leaves us with two classes of theologians: those who are most closely associated with the teaching church and who will have the task of educating the next generations must be publicly silent on the theological quandaries most troubling the People of God; instead, these problems will be openly confronted only by those at a distance from Catholic institutions, who may be but need not be cognizant of or in conformity with the mind of the church. The history of the Modernist crisis reminds us of the toll this path took in secrecy, hypocrisy, and the intellectual deformation of three generations of clergy and bishops. This reading spells slow death.

DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

"Criticism of papal pronouncements will be possible and even necessary, to the degree that they lack support in Scripture and the Creed, that is, in the faith of the whole church. When neither the consensus of the whole church is had, nor clear evidence from the sources is available, a definitive decision is not possible. Were one formally to take place, while conditions for such an act were lacking, the question would have to be raised concerning its legitimacy."—Joseph Ratzinger, Düsseldorf, 1969; quoted by Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., *Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church*, Paulist Press, 1983.

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But a maximalist view is also possible; a judgment that by means of this Instruction—in combination with Canon 812, the revised oath of office and profession of faith, and further Instructions from the Congregation—a much larger group of Catholic thinkers will fall under the Law of Silence. The result will probably be more defiance than acceptance, but in any case an effective discrediting of Catholic intellectual life.

The maximalist interpretation also notes the Instruction's claim that "It is a doctrine of faith that... moral norms can be infallibly taught by the magisterium." Is this a forerunner of a papal encyclical on the infallibility of moral norms to be proclaimed or already proclaimed(e.g., *Humanae vitae*)? If so, a gauntlet will be thrown down defining Catholicity to include formal, unquestioning acceptance of (or total silence about) official Roman teaching in matters of sexual morality, particularly artificial contraception, regardless of the many statements by individual bishops and episcopal conferences (as well as theologians) recognizing the claims of conscience in this matter. For great numbers of Catholics of all ranks, the choice will be to fall silent, dissemble, or take their leave of the Roman church. We believe this spells disaster.

Either a minimalist or a maximalist reading of the new Instruction calls for a concerted reaction of an informed, intelligent, persistent kind. Lay people ought to read and analyze this document to better understand the issues we face (for text, see, *Origins*, July 5, 1990). U.S. and Canadian theologians, who have recently prepared a response to the oath of office, ought to give this document equally careful scrutiny. All informed Catholics must press the bishops to respond. Ostensibly the Instruction is addressed to them but they are ignored throughout; ultimately, it puts their role and authority as teachers in question. Not in self-defense, but in defense of the church and of truth, it is time for those among them with any sense of what might be at stake to make their anguish heard.

NOT WITH MY MONEY

A year ago, the director of Washington's Corcoran Gallery canceled an exhibit of works by Robert Mapplethorpe, which included photos with homoerotic and sadomasochistic motifs. Since then, the country has been embroiled in a nasty debate about pornography, art, freedom of speech, and taxpayer support of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities (NEA and NEH). Because the National Endowment for the Arts funded both the Mapplethorpe exhibit and another including a photo by Andres Serrano of a crucifix suspended in a beaker of urine, popular pressure has grown to cut or control NEA funding as well as that of the NEH. A pending bill, if it does not fail outright, may include significant cutbacks and restrictions.

To some observers, it is the very existence of the pressure that makes the current debate a nasty one. The question, "Why should tax dollars go for art that many taxpayers find patently offensive?" is taken as sufficient evidence of a fatal philistinism. On the contrary, it strikes us that such a question about the appropriate or moral use of tax dollars is unexceptionable, having previously been raised about the war in Vietnam, abortion funding, and an array of other government expenditures. It is also a question to which a reasonably adequate answer can be made. The nastiness of the debate stems not from asking such a question but from the arrogance of many in the country's cultural elite, who no longer feel required to reason with their fellow citizens, preferring to demonize them as enemy forces threatening to bring about the joint reign of Torquemada and Queen Victoria.

Commonweal will resume its normal publication schedule beginning with the next issue, to be dated September 14th.

The reasonable answer to the question of tax funding for the arts goes like this:

First, controversial grants of the Mapplethorpe/Serrano sort account for a tiny percentage of the two Endowments' efforts. Both have, in fact, expended the bulk of their resources on well-established institutions and on projects rooted in serious artistic and intellectual tradition, and this funding has helped to maintain public access to exhibits and performances that otherwise might have never been mounted, or would have been priced beyond the means of most people.

This conservative tendency in allocating funds is debatable, but it has been the lesson of experience that decisions about grants for the arts and humanities, as well as science and medicine, should be carried on largely among peers and insulated from governmental lobbying, log-rolling, and job-mongering. Finally, it must be acknowledged that a great deal of enduring art and thought was initially shocking, even offensive. Thus, one might reasonably conclude, better to shrug off an occasional Serrano than transform the funding of arts and letters into something resembling the pork barrel of defense contracts.

As to proposals that funding be conditioned on pledges not to do things that the law already forbids, these gestures strike us as precedents to be avoided even while we are hardly convinced that they are the death knell of artistic freedom and creativity. As for closing down the Endowments altogether, that would be a sorry loss to our already limited and constricted support of public life—much as paving over city parks would be a terrible loss to urban dwellers.

So far, so good. Unfortunately not far enough. The truth is that in our world, outrage has become routinized in art—outrage has become the very product of art rather than a byproduct. So it becomes ever more difficult for the public to know whether a particular funding decision recognizes a valuable though highly disturbing new work, or follows the path of least resistance and indulges the latest *enfant terrible*. The cultural elite, made up of the artistic and scholarly peers to whom it seems prudent to delegate these decisions, is saying, in effect, "Trust us."

And that is where the heart of the current controversy should really be examined, not in a narrowly political debate about funding mechanisms. We doubt that the public is clamoring for an end to the Endowments; rather, it found in the Endowment debate a place to deliver a message.

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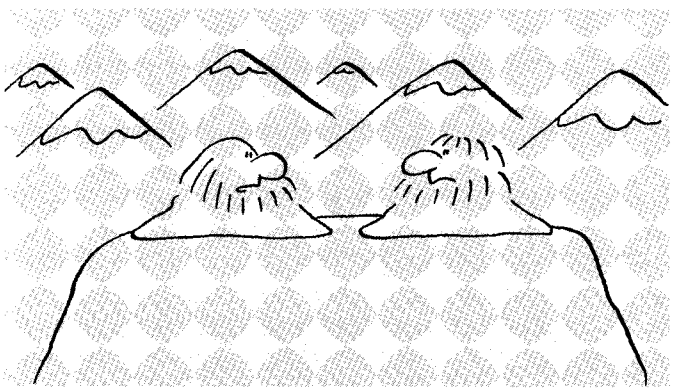
That message is "enough."

"Enough" to the steadily eroding barriers against obscenity and human degradation in the public sphere: to wit, the song lyrics of 2 Live Crew; the appearance of Andrew "Dice" Clay, a foul-mouthed and abusive comedian, on "Saturday Night Live"; hard-core pornography on cable TV and a steadily increasing amount of soft-core on network TV; an explosion (the proper word) of gratuitous violence in films.

But perhaps more important, "enough" to a curious marriage of morally obtuse culturati and of media in search of sensation. The question of funding the Endowments has become a question of confidence in the country's cultural elite. It has stirred the perennial yahoos and the populist demagogues, but it has also demonstrated how many live-and-let-live citizens now doubt whether the artistic norm-setters have lost all touch with moral sensibility.

This is a question that won't be resolved in Congress. It will be resolved, rather, when much of this middle-of-the-road public sees that the media are capable of treating the issue in a more even-handed way, not simply framing it from the perspective of the offended artists, their agents, and supporters while portraying critics of Mapplethorpe, rock lyrics, and blue movies as petty puritans if not outright Nazis.

It will also be resolved as the public sees more examples of individual moral judgment, neither employing the law's power to censor nor citing its limitations to avoid responsibility. The refusal of Nora Dunn and Sinead O'Connor to appear with Andrew "Dice" Clay on "Saturday Night Live" spoke courageously to his antiwomen obscenities. Had only the Mapplethorpe exhibit encountered a curator with similar independence of judgment, capable of making moral distinctions rather than acting out of fear of Jesse Helms or dogmatic adherence to the code of art above all. Would that there were more media executives with a fraction of the sensitivity about frivolous trashing of people's sexual and religious values of the kind they have (quite rightly if belatedly) developed about racial stereotypes. If directors of museums and other "gatekeepers," producers, reviewers, editorialists, teachers, and "peers," performed their critical functions, we would be smarter about fine lines to be drawn between the legitimately shocking, the morally challenging, the erotic, the obscene, and the degrading. And we would be wiser about the line that will necessarily be drawn in allocating public moneys for the arts and humanities.



"You realize, if we ever do *discover the meaning of life, that will be the end of our federal grant."*

SYMBOLIC VALUE

For some the recently concluded—or is it merely postponed?—debate on the flag amendment was a source of vexation, even embarrassment. A great nation, beset with complex economic and social problems, was diverted by a petty squabble over an emblem. Considering the demagoguery inherent in the issue as well as the longstanding commercial exploitation of the flag, it is difficult to generate any real enthusiasm for amending the Bill of Rights to outlaw flag desecration. We do not favor such a sanction. Indeed, given the tendency to manipulate patriotic sentiment for partisan gain, talk of "protecting the dignity" of the flag seems disingenuous. This impression is further encouraged by the common notion that the flag is only a symbol, after all. What the flag stands for, namely the Constitution and freedom of speech, is what really counts. The flag is, finally, just a scrap of cloth, and when pressed about its intrinsic value people imagine it can be dispensed with easily. As some libertarian conservatives warn, we must not make the flag an object of worship.

But Americans, and Catholics in particular, should be suspicious about such a devaluation of the symbolic, should be leery around talk that subordinates the value of symbols to the supposedly self-evident authority of explicit speech and glorifies speech over nonverbal communication. There is an important distinction between idolatry and the power and efficacy of the symbolic. Symbols such as the flag are not archaic vestiges of a primitive or "unenlightened" citizenship, any more than a Catholic's reverence for religious images is a sign of irrational credulity. Symbols are as meaningful as the complex social and moral allegiances sustaining them. They help us organize experience and communicate with each other at a profound level. In subtle but indispensable ways, symbols such as the flag hold us together even while we battle each other. They are not to be denigrated or dismissed as superfluous.

The majority of Americans who instinctively feel protecting the flag is a "reasonable" imposition on individual autonomy are not confusing it with a magical object that requires obeisance. Rather, the issue is one of a hierarchy of values, not an either/or choice between free and censored speech. At the most literal level, respect for the flag is seen as evidence of a basic commitment to the American enterprise as a whole above and beyond the discrete rights that flow from democracy. In this sense, it expresses a healthy, pragmatic understanding that there are no rights without larger duties. Chesterton said that we must love something before we can hope to reform it. Laws prohibiting flag desecration are attempts to promote and give expression to that deeper loyalty.

The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., recognized the need for demonstrating such loyalty when challenging authority. In his

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use of nonviolent civil disobedience, King sought out the legal penalty for dissent. In doing so he acknowledged the legitimacy of the system as a whole and could therefore demand accountability within that system from his adversaries. He had to foster the idea of legal obligation even as he challenged it. In a very real sense, he made white America pledge allegiance to the flag, and in doing so established a coherent if grudging dialogue with his oppressors.

It is within this social and political context that laws penalizing those who desecrate the flag should be understood. Such prohibitions, provided they are not onerous, are no tyranny or denial of basic rights. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court has judged such traditional measures, long on the books in many states, unconstitutional. Now it has ruled the federal statute protecting the flag invalid. These narrowly reasoned and alienating decisions will hinder, not help, communication between antagonistic groups. Still, amending the Constitution to reverse the Court would be a hyperbolic reaction.

The jingoistic fallout from the flag debate underscores the need for those who bravely defend individual rights to find some way to champion symbols of the community's collective conscience. Symbols of public honor and obligation are not ignoble; they are indispensable in creating the social energy to confront problems. If you want to wage war—on communism or on poverty—you need a moral consensus. Wherever you intend to lead the troops, you can't get them organized without a flag. That banner should be grasped, not rendered meaningless.

ET CETERA

PURSED LIPS The revocation of President George Bush's nonirreformable stand on taxes may have given Republicans apoplexy but it was a godsend for headline writers. "Republicans Fear a Kiss of Death As Bush Moves His Lips on Taxes," wrote an inspired *New York Times* copy editor. The *New York Post*, in its fashion, was more blunt. "READ MY LIPS:" thundered the entire front page of the tabloid, "I LIED."

More sober headlines and analysis followed. "CHAPPED LIPS" was the title of a July 30 Sidney Blumenthal piece in the *New Republic*. Blumenthal heralds a seismic political shift with the aftershocks of Bush's recantation. The bills incurred by Reagan's make-believe politics are finally coming due, he argues. Congressional Republicans, who face the ire of the electorate this November, are threatening mutiny, fearing Bush has deprived them of an issue that has crippled the so-called tax-and-spend Democratic party for nearly twenty-five years. Bush will need plenty of lip gloss to survive.

Bush's sore lips go back to Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan. She was the ventriloquist who put those not so eatable words "Read my lips: no new taxes" on Bush's patrician lips during the 1988 Republican National Convention. Given the success of Ms. Noonan's book (*What I Saw At the Revolution*), she is destined belatedly for the higher income-tax brackets where Reagan's budget-busting rate decreases are expected to be rolled back. Perhaps that is only poetic justice. If clever but empty words were taxed in proportion to the folly and suffering such rhetoric encourages, political speech might rise above the level of a Clint Eastwood-Ronald Reagan one-liner.

Go ahead, make our day.

REPORT FROM MEXICO

MEET ME IN CHURCH

SALINAS, THE POPE & THE LEFT

Though often ignored, provisions of Mexico's 1917 Constitution prohibit the Roman Catholic church or any other church from owning property, conducting outdoor services, or participating in public education. Priests can't vote, hold public office, or wear vestments outside of religious buildings. The Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI), which has governed in Tammany Hall-style since 1929, has been second to none in vilifying the church. The PRI has rallied militants by warning of "alliances," "secret deals," and "plots" between bishops and fat-cat corporations—especially in the free-enterprise-oriented Monterrey area.

Despite a public donnybrook over election irregularities in Chihuahua in the mid-1980s, church-state relations began to improve under the last chief executive, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado (1982-88). He grew up in a devout Catholic family, was baptized, received First Communion, and married in a church ceremony. Paloma, his wife, even invited the apostolic delegate, Jerónimo Prigione, to say Mass in the Los Pinos presidential residence.

Prigione, a shrewd, skillful negotiator, began convening meetings between key bishops and the then-Secretary of Interior, Manuel Bartlett Díaz. Cold and awkward at first, these sessions evolved into a constructive dialogue between traditional antagonists. As Prigione recently told me: "I simply wanted to bring together people who didn't really know why they were supposed to hate each other." Besides, he added, "now that the Berlin Wall has fallen, so many new relationships are possible in the world."

De la Madrid's handpicked successor, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, has even more assiduously propitiated Mexico's episcopate. Before being tapped as the PRI's standard-bearer for the July 1988 election, the forty-year-old technocrat who boasts two advanced degrees from Harvard had never before held elective office. He is baldheaded and diminutive and one swag-bellied labor chief lamented: "He just doesn't possess the background, looks, and bearing of a *jefe maximo*."

To add insult to injury, the PRI had to cook the results to ensure Salinas's victory with 50.4 percent of the vote—a figure later adjusted to 50.7 percent. A *Los Angeles Times* poll showed

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that two-thirds of Mexicans believe that Salinas actually lost to Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of the most beloved president in modern Mexican history and leader of a nationalist-leftist coalition Democratic Revolutionary party (PRD).

Since swearing the presidential oath a year-and-a-half ago, Salinas has shown considerable leadership qualities. Within forty-five days of taking office, he dispatched the army to arrest Joaquín "La Quina" Hernández Galicia, the supposedly "untouchable" leader of the nation's venal and wealthy Oil Workers' Union. Several months later, he replaced Carlos Jongitud Barrios, a former senator, and since 1972 leader of the large and politically antagonistic National Teachers' Union. Next, his administration jailed Eduardo Legoretta Chauvet, a member of a powerful business family, for securities manipulation at the time of the late-1987 stock market crash. In addition, authorities threw drug kingpin Felix Gallardo in jail.

Meanwhile, the tough-as-nails economist has pursued a "modernization" program by curbing bureaucratic growth, privatizing 600 state firms, and boosting tax collections. He has also trimmed subsidies, brought down sky-high import barriers, and courted foreign investors. Salinas is determined to streamline Mexico's statist, corrupt economy in order to integrate it with those of the U.S. and Canada. Otherwise, he fears, Mexico will become a stagnant backwater while Europe and the Pacific rim emerge as dynamic trading blocs.

In contrast, Cárdenas and his PRD are committed to protectionism, central planning, and Yankee-baiting. For them, the early June agreement of Salinas and George Bush to explore a Free Trade Accord is the political equivalent of fingernails clawing a blackboard.

While decisive leadership has increased the chief executive's personal popularity, the scope and velocity of his initiatives have alienated and disoriented many people. Some bureaucrats fear the loss of bribes as market forces replace Byzantine regulations. Union leaders accustomed to sweetheart contracts decry obstacles to their achieving hefty salary increases. Businessmen accustomed to monopolies and 35 percent annual profits bemoan "unfair" competition as U.S. and Japanese competitors seize more opportunities. And pro-Cárdenas intellectuals lament the inexorable interlocking of the Mexican and U.S. economies—a process, they claim, that will cause the loss of national sovereignty.

Although baptized, confirmed, and married in church, Salinas is not a practicing Catholic. Still, as a progressive, he considers anticlericalism outmoded. Moreover, like any embattled politician, he's constantly on the hunt for allies. Even during his campaign, he met with northern bishops who had lambasted PRI's electoral chicanery. And long before the pope's recent visit was confirmed, he invited Mexico City's Cardinal Ernesto Corripio Ahumada, Prigione, and other senior churchmen to his inaugural address. In his speech, he said that "the modern state is that which maintains openness and modernizes its relations with the church." In February, he dispatched a personal envoy to the Vatican with which diplomatic relations were broken in 1859.

Salinas gave impetus to this church-state rapprochement by rolling out the red carpet for John Paul II on his May 6 arrival in Mexico City. Acting in a "personal capacity," Salinas warmly praised the "pilgrim of peace" for "promoting more justice, more participation, more attention—especially with respect to the poor whose destiny is ours." The government spent billions of pesos on security, transport, road improvements, and medical care to facilitate the pope's visit to ten states, where he attracted some 30 million people.

Approximately 94 percent of all TV sets in the nation tuned in to the arrival ceremony. As a result of his attentiveness to the pontiff, the president's personal standing shot up four to six points in the polls. The evening before John Paul II left, Salinas personally bade him farewell in a phone call to the Apostolic Delegation. The pope took the call on a red telephone that the president had given the apostolic delegate—a symbol of the open lines of communication that both wish to maintain.

Cárdenas, the PRD, and other leftist groups had a golden opportunity to cash in politically on the pontiff's visit. After all, the pope focused on the plight of Mexico's have-nots, excoriated bureaucratic corruption, called for improved nutrition in a country where one-third of the population goes to bed hungry, and lamented the fact that affluent entrepreneurs do so little to help the poor. In addition, the pope expressed to a diplomatic assembly the "urgency" of resolving the Latin American debt crisis.

Virtually every papal utterance offered ammunition to Cárdenas and his colleagues who claim to speak for "workers, peasants, slum-dwellers, and the dispossessed." The PRD leader and his allies should have wrapped themselves in the pope's speeches, while blasting Salinas's neoliberal government for stressing debt repayments, market mechanisms, and preference for the private sector at the expense of those who eke out a living at the bottom of a distended social pyramid.

Instead of making common cause with the pope, Cárdenas criticized the "squandering" of resources on the visit, as well as John Paul II's "meddling" in Mexican politics. Meanwhile, Francisco Ortiz Mendoza, head of the Popular Socialist party that backed Cárdenas's 1988 presidential bid, reportedly urged the application of the Constitution's Article 33 to remove the pope from the country. TELEVISA, the state-influenced TV network, fully ventilated the left's carping, allowing the left to hang itself with the rope of anticlericalism. By pope-bashing, Cárdenas, Ortiz Mendoza, and their associates demonstrated insensitivity to grassroots Mexicans, more than 90 percent of whom identify themselves as Catholics.

As Sergio Sarmiento, a writer for the daily *El Financiero,* stated: "Rather than pay attention [to the public's adoration of the pope]...the left preferred to stir up old dogmas that insist that religion is the opiate of the people."

The Virgin of Guadalupe eclipses the national flag as a unifying symbol in Mexico. Sweeping constitutional amendments are unlikely because of the bitter conflict they would spark. But Salinas's overtures to the pontiff combined with the left's insensitivity should enhance the PRI's appeal to the faithful—especially to campesinos, women, and slum dwellers who flocked to Cárdenas in the 1988 election. More important, by extending the olive branch to the church, Salinas may buy time for his version of *perestroika* and still avoid the upheaval that has beset other modernizing nations. This herculean task is somewhat

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easier given Cárdenas's adeptness at shooting himself in the foot.

GEORGE W. GRAYSON

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CIGARETTE COMMERCIALS

LIMITING THE PITCH

TOMBSTONE ADS FOR COFFIN NAILS

The late Supreme Court Justice and First Amendment absolutist Hugo Black once observed that a door-to-door seller of pots has no constitutional right to hawk his wares. Since he uttered those words in a 1951 decision, such merchants—and their advertisers—not only hawked pots, gadgets, and other wares but have been crowned with a constitutional right to do so. Almost forty years and many billions of dollars later, the freedom of speech protection originally created to protect the town crier or Communist revolutionary now applies to the Marlboro Man and Budweiser's Spuds MacKenzie.

Of course, one cannot say precisely what the Founding Fathers would think about such speechmakers. Yet, in our consumer-driven and image-conscious society, it is no surprise that advertisers—who in the process of selling the product also subsidize our media—have become among the most powerful purveyors of information in American society.

At a time of rising public health and safety concerns over tobacco products, the advertising of these items has come into question. From the recent pronouncements of Bush administration officials like Dr. Louis Sullivan, the head of the Department of Health and Human Services, to members of Congress, the time is politically ripe for restricting tobacco advertising from the nation's newspapers, magazines, billboards, and stadia.

Indeed, tobacco ads in particular are a justifiable target for regulation. Smoking is hazardous to your health: causing lung cancer and other dangerous diseases that account for 390,000 deaths a year. Over a quarter century after the surgeon general's report and almost two decades after being banned from the broadcast media, tobacco companies, despite (or because of) declining numbers of smokers, spend billions for advertisements in the print media. The latest Federal Trade Commission figures show that $2.5 billion was spent in 1987 for tobacco advertising and promotions as compared to $1.2 billion in 1980 and $361 million in 1970, despite (or more likely because of) a decline in domestic sales since 1981. The increases in advertising are even more significant, since cigarette ads have been prohibited from radio and television since 1971.

Newspapers and magazine advertisements account for one-quarter of the 1987 total, or about $412 million. This compares with $45 million in 1970, or a ninefold increase, according to the FTC study.

If cigarettes cause such health dangers, the question becomes why are they allowed to advertise so freely. The answer lies in recent First Amendment interpretation. Although advertising (known in legal circles as "commercial speech") only became an official member of the First Amendment club in 1976, the judiciary has, until very recently, given Madison Avenue a great deal of protection, often preventing state and federal governments from regulating it.

A Supreme Court decision that received little notice last year may signal a significant shift away from *carte blanche* protection in favor of more reasonable governmental regulation of commercial speech.

State University of New York v. *Fox* involved trivial, even rather humorous facts. Essentially, a university-wide ban on conducting "commercial activities" in student dorms was upheld as constitutional in a 6-3 opinion. A "tupperware party" led by a representative of a firm that sells dishware to college students violated that ordinance. Despite the less than earthshaking facts, the high court may have accepted the case to try to find a way to solve the thorny problem of the protection of commercial speech.

Thorny is an apt description of commercial speech law. Even defining the term is tricky: some courts considered it "expression related solely to the economic interests of the speaker and its audience" (which could probably include a presidential campaign appearance on the subject of tax reform), while others have characterized it as "speech proposing a commercial transaction" (which could exempt the series of General Electric ads that "bring good things to life"). Yet in practice, it is not difficult to tell commercial speech from political and other discourse; former Justice Potter Stewart's famous definition of obscenity also applies to commercial speech: You know it when you see it. Selling sneakers is just not the same thing as advocating a change in the capital gains tax.

While courts expanded the scope of political speech protection since the 1920s, commercial speech was hamstrung by the unanimous 1942 decision of *Valentine* v. *Chrestensen*, in which the Supreme Court upheld a New York regulation prohibiting "handbills, circulars...or any other advertising matter in or upon any street."

After subsequent courts began to chip away at the *Valentine* rationale, commercial speech became constitutionalized in 1976 when the Supreme Court ruled in *Virginia State Board of Pharmacy* v. *Virginia Citizens Consumer Council* that a state ban on the advertising of prices of prescription drugs by pharmacists was unconstitutional. Speaking in often sweeping language, the Court considered "truthful" advertising part of the "free flow of information" in which the consumer has more than just a passing interest.

In 1980, the Court articulated a method of review, couched in terms of a "balancing" between the right asserted and the state's interest in regulating that right. It devised a somewhat vague test tailor-made for academicians and sophists. Known as the *Central Hudson* test (after the decision of *Central Hudson* v. *Public Service Commission*), it applies only to "truthful speech"

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and requires the state to show: a "substantial government interest for regulating the speech"; that the regulation "directly advances the government's interest"; and that it is not "more extensive than necessary to serve that interest" to be able to survive constitutional attack. (If deemed to be misleading, it has no constitutional protection at all.)

The test appears to have been a compromise between commercial speech absolutists and less doctrinaire members of the court—theoretically precise, yet difficult to apply. The last element—the "not more restrictive than necessary" requirement—seemed to impose a demanding standard that made it quite difficult for commercial speech regulations to pass muster.

The importance of the decision in favor of regulation in *Fox* is that it answered the question of how to interpret *Central Hudson*, and did so in a more practical manner than prior courts. This has opened the door to greater government restrictions on advertising. Justice Scalia, writing for the six-Justice majority, essentially adopted the less onerous standard; the restriction may not be the most limited possible, but has to be sufficiently "narrow" and "direct" in scope to serve as a direct connection between the restriction and the goals it purports to serve.

Cutting through the legal niceties, *Fox* means that commercial speech still has constitutional protection, but it is not effectively regulation-proof. *Fox* now gives state legislatures and Congress the chance to draft meaningful regulations to limit, maybe even bar, tobacco advertising and to restrict alcohol commercials.

Fortunately, not only are the legal times changing, but also the political tides may be turning. Last month, Congressman Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), along with twenty-three cosponsors, introduced a comprehensive bill to greatly restrict tobacco advertising, by prohibiting the use of any "human or cartoon figure, tobacco product trademark, or picture, other than the picture of a single package of the tobacco product." This provision—derived from earlier legislation proposed by cosponsors Mike Synar (D-Okla.) and Thomas Luken (D-Ohio)—would require pictureless or "tombstone" ads essentially identifying the brand. Although the bill would not restrict the textual content, it would greatly reduce the "allure" of many ads, which often feature attractive men and women and somewhat seductive or athletic poses. If adopted, future tobacco ads would look like the those seen for stock and bond offerings in the financial pages of the local newspaper. The Waxman legislation also prohibits tobacco advertisements in sports stadiums, placement of a tobacco product in movies, television shows, or other forms of entertainment for a fee, requires states to adopt legislation prohibiting sales to young people under the age of nineteen, and restricts sales through vending machines. The bill imposes fines up to $100,000 per day for each violation. Hearings on the bill took place earlier this month.

According to Waxman, the goal of this legislation is to "stop tobacco sales to youth and force tobacco companies to tell the truth about the health effects of their products." Of course, the legislation, if passed by both houses (still by no means guaranteed because of the continued power of the tobacco lobby and representatives from tobacco-producing states) and signed by the president (also by no means assured) would be able to withstand an inevitable constitutional challenge. *Fox* all but guarantees that.

It goes without saying that the state interest in protecting children (or adults for that matter) from smoking is not only substantial, but compelling. Although the tobacco industry claims that their ads do not intend to seek new smokers, but are just for brand identification (and there are marketing studies bolstering their position), that begs the question. Why should a dangerous product be promoted *for any reason*? Shouldn't smokers be encouraged to stop the habit, not be enticed to use one deadly brand over another? A limitation of alluring advertisements displaying attractive men and women puffing would "directly advance" the interest to limit new smokers, particularly young people. Finally, the legislation is "not more restrictive than necessary," since it does not ban print advertising, or even limit its textual material. Before *Fox*, some clever tobacco industry attorney could argue that the restrictions were not the most limited possible to achieve their goals; after *Fox*, a court could easily dismiss such a claim.

Of course, public attitudes and governmental policy will contribute heavily to the enactment of restrictions on tobacco advertisements. But the Supreme Court's second thoughts about a restrictive and intractable constitutional standard in an area of dubious constitutional value will set the wheels of legislation turning to chart an evenhanded and reasonable course protecting the public from the purveyors of disease and death. To paraphrase Justice Black: there should not be a blanket right for such merchants to hawk such wares.

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OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

EXTRAORDINARY MEANS

APPROACHING THE ABYSS IN MICHIGAN

Doctor Jack Kevorkian has been in the news a lot recently. He has invented a machine that allows people to kill themselves. A woman named Janet Adkins, who was in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, has made him famous by proving that the machine works. I think this is all that was proven here. Dr. Kevorkian—a man who sounds in interviews like those intense people who spend their lives in public libraries, looking for evidence to prove that World War II never happened or that the earth is actually another planet of the same name—believes that something different has been demonstrated: a real need for his product. People call him all the time, he says, asking for his help in killing themselves. "There's obviously a need for this," he told the *New York Times*. "Why should I care what brainwashed ethicists and nonthinking physicians say?"

Some of those brainwashed ethicists have been startled by Dr. Kevorkian before. According to the *Times*, he was forced to leave the University of Michigan Hospital after officials learned of his proposal to make death-row inmates permanently unconscious for purposes of medical experimentation. He also wants to see reusable organs removed from the executed—why should anything go to waste? The existence of people like Dr. Kevorkian could be taken as a sign that God has a sense of humor, even if it may, on occasions like this, be darker than our own. But we all knew that.

There is an important moral and social issue here, however bizarre Dr. Kevorkian may be. I can understand the desperation and unhappiness of Mrs. Adkins and some of her family. Alzheimer's is a particularly cruel disease. I sympathize with something my father said a couple of years ago. "If I'm ever diagnosed as having Alzheimer's," he said, "I'll take up hang-gliding."

Mrs. Adkins had done that, apparently, even before the onset of Alzheimer's, but not as a disguised way to end it all. The pictures we have been given of her show a self-determined woman, the sort often called "plucky" (isn't it interesting that people seldom use that word for men?), who wanted to be in charge of her life to the very end. That desire is apparently an essential part of our fabric; polls show many if not most Americans agreeing that people ought to be assisted in suicide, if suicide should be their desire, and a fair number of physicians agreeing with them, and another fair number of doctors admitting that they had in fact helped people toward their deaths.

If you thought abortion was a tricky and controversial subject, keep an eye on this one. Not all of us get pregnant against our wills or have to deal directly with that difficult subject. All of us will die; a great many of us have living parents who might spend time suffering in hospitals or hospices; many of us have wives or husbands for whom difficult decisions may have to be made; many of us have children who may be called on to make difficult decisions about us.

As in the case of abortion, this has to do with questions so basic they test pluralism. When prolife people insist that euthanasia, or the question of abortion, is not a religious question they are wrong. It is. It should be. To the extent that religion does not address such problems it is of little or no use to us, ethically. It is not, however, a denominational question. It is religious (or at least philosophical in a way that approaches religion) because it engages us in assessing the most fundamental values people live by, as slavery did, as the use of weapons for mass destruction does.

Something unites the issues of abortion and euthanasia. People who oppose both argue that life has an inherent value. They speak of the sanctity of human life. Sacredness would be a better word here than sanctity, which is a quality not found in many human beings. Sacredness inheres in all of us, because we would not exist if we were not loved by God. Value is given to us, regardless of how we feel about it. For a Christian this is a matter of faith—which is to say, it is not a subjective feeling, but something we believe to be as real as gravity or light. Let's call this View One.

Those who argue for the moral acceptability of abortion or euthanasia as a matter of right, because people have the right to choose, define life as valuable to the extent that it is welcomed by the community, or for that matter by oneself: my life, my body, is a kind of property with which I may do what I will. If I believe that a new life cannot, sometimes for very serious reasons, be welcomed into my own life, I may end it. If I find my own life burdensome, or a potential burden to others, I may end it. There is no question here of life—the life of a fetus or my own—having an inherent value, something so sacred that it is not up to me to decide its fate. Call this View Two, recognizing that between View One and View Two there are degrees of agreement or disagreement with either pole.

As a Christian, I believe that my life is not my own. Nor is the life of an unborn child (human, or potentially human—however one wants to define it) a thing without value. There is divine meaning there. May I impose these views on others, who are not believers? The alternative, I'm afraid, is that their view will be imposed on me and on the rest of society. Life will be dealt with as if it were in fact without inherent value, and I will be given the choice to disagree privately.

While I believe that Christians should not rely on law, a coercive thing, but should emphasize persuasion, even in the most serious cases, it is important to see why these particular issues test the limits of pluralism.

To say that nothing can be done socially, that we should succumb to the prochoice argument in the areas of abortion and euthanasia, is in effect to enshrine View Two—as definite a philosophical stance as any religion ever was—in law, without challenge. View Two has always regarded religion as a matter of taste, an entirely personal choice, which can be accepted

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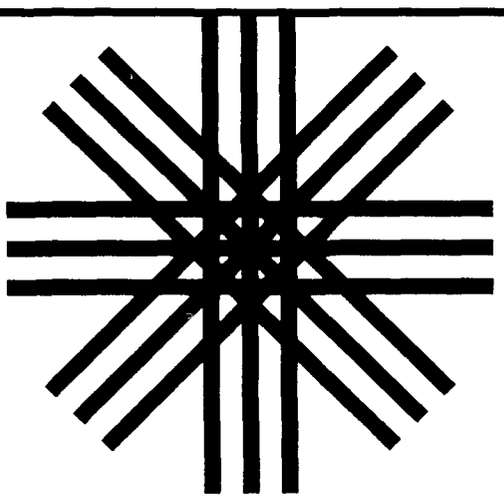
as long as it does not present a forceful challenge to View Two. Believers, precisely as believers, can't accept this. Neither side can win this one absolutely without eclipsing the other; and a middle ground will be painful to both. That painful middle ground may be the most we can hope for.

It is important, though, not to oversimplify what is involved here. Medical advances have made dying a much longer process for many suffering people. The belief that one can refuse to have one's life continued by "extraordinary means" is complicated by such things as the feeding tube. This seems an example of extraordinary means to me; I never eat lunch that way. But is it right to withdraw a tube from a person who is comatose, with no chance of recovery? Is this the same thing as starving a person to death? I can't think that allowing someone to die without using such methods—or even by removing a tube—is morally the same thing as active euthanasia. I haven't made a living will, but I think I should. I want my family to know that I don't want to be kept alive that way. The death of the body is not the worst thing that can happen to me. To preserve life at all costs is a terrible thing, and arguably unchristian.

I talked about all of this with a doctor whose opinion I respect. He pointed out the pressures to see these questions in the most brutal economic terms: It is expensive to keep someone alive in a vegetative state; therefore, pull the plug. There are cases in which people thought to have been hopeless are not, and recover. There are also, my friend said, bad doctors out there for whom a relatively easy attitude towards turning off respirators and pulling feeding tubes will be a positive boon; let's not make it easier on them, he said. Moral arguments will be used—abused, actually—by some bioethicists in order to allow people to pursue goals that have less to do with morality and genuine compassion than with the economic bottom line and personal convenience.

I can understand why someone would want to die rather than live at the end of life-support systems, comatose, or would want to die rather than feel the self—the only self you ever knew—being canceled by the invasion of Alzheimer's disease. I can understand those fears viscerally, and know why in his final illness Kafka told his doctor, "If you won't kill me, you're a murderer." It is much harder, at times almost impossible, to see life's holiness in the suffering of someone comatose or the dreadful decline of an Alzheimer's patient than it is to see the glory of life in an infant or growing child or healthy adult. But to see what is sacred in any human life (including the life of the condemned mass murderer) is part of our human vocation.

It may indeed be faithless, as well as cruel, to keep a suffering person alive at all costs; and there is certainly a thin line between active enthanasia and allowing someone to die, even withdrawing support where the person's wishes are clear. That line, however, is essential. It is the line between *denying* and *recognizing* that life is not ours to control, nor is the value of life dependent upon our recognition of that value, nor is its quality—that is, its similarity to our definitions of a desirable life—the most important thing about it. The fact that it *is*, is a mystery, one we must revere. It would not be, if it were not loved. We aren't allowed to back away from this one. □



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Original and unpublished essays of approximately 2500–4000 words should be submitted to the editors of COMMONWEAL who will make the final decision following consultation with a panel of experts. The winning essay will receive a prize of $1,000 and will be published in COMMONWEAL. The editors reserve the right not to award the prize.

Deadline: October 15, 1990. Announcement of Prize: January 1, 1991. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's Contemporary Theology Issue, January 25, 1991. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors.

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NEWMAN'S INFALLIBLE INSTINCTS

THE ARGUMENT FOR ELBOWROOM

JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK

One hundred years after his death, how does one sum up the life and work of John Henry Newman? His ninety-year life, neatly divided at 1845 by his conversion to Catholicism, spanned the decades of the nineteenth century. His initial and ever-basic conversion at the age of fifteen was a moment in the evangelical revival still flourishing at the beginning of the century. Oxford taught him how to think and write (matchlessly). There he also gradually came to the appreciation of the critical importance of tradition and authority that led to his central role in the Oxford movement. His participation in the religious debates of his time was so great that his conversion to Catholicism in 1845 caused public shock. During the Catholic half of his life, he pioneered theologically with his essays on the development of doctrine, the place of the laity in the church, the role and limits of authority, and the relation of faith and reason. After two decades of living under a cloud, he found his life-work justified and honored when Leo XIII made him one of his first cardinals in 1879, and by the time he died, on August 11, 1890, he was one of the most respected of all Englishmen.

In the course of so long a life and so rich and diverse a work, Newman said and wrote many things; and it is not rare to find him quoted, still today, on various sides in religious disputes. The author of the famous comment, "Here below to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often," was not one to believe that intellectual integrity means never learning anything new nor ever changing one's mind.

On one occasion Newman himself identified the connecting thread of his life's work. In the "Biglietto speech" he gave in Rome as he received the red hat, he spoke of his consistent opposition to "one great mischief," "the spirit of liberalism in religion." He defined this notoriously elusive term as "the Anti-Dogmatic principle," that is "the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another." In an appendix to the *Apologia*, he spelled this out in a series of eighteen propositions which illustrate liberalism as reducing the Creed to what can be proved, understood, or experienced, subjecting it to the latest state of scientific research or public consensus, removing it from public significance. He summed it all up nicely: Liberalism "is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion, as *true*. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, for all are matters of opinion. Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; not an objective fact, not miraculous; and it is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy.... Since, then, religion is so personal a peculiarity and so private a possession, we must of necessity ignore it in the intercourse of man with man. If a man puts on a new religion every morning, what is that to you? It is as impertinent to think about a man's religion as about his sources of income or his management of his family. Religion is in no sense the bond of society."

This analysis has an uncanny contemporary relevance to issues of Catholic faith and life and their public significance; and much of what sociologists today describe in terms of the individualizing, privatizing, and marginalizing of religion is already identified, much more elegantly, in Newman's analysis. When he began his work, evangelical Christianity was powerful enough to have inspired the abolition of the slave trade; by the time he died he feared the church would soon be living in "a world simply irreligious," "a time when the world does not acknowledge our first principles."

Newman did not deny that there was much that was good in liberalism: its broad ethical principles, its methods of scientific research, the efforts at social improvement. His *Idea of a University* vindicates the necessity of pursuing excellence in the use of new empirical methods. But just as that book argued forcefully that the absence of theology from a university's programs not only neglects a province of reality but invites other disciplines to usurp that province, Newman faulted liberalism for wishing to substitute its principles for religion. Thus, he said, liberals believe that "Political economy may reverse our Lord's declarations about poverty and riches," as, in Dickens's *Hard Times*, where Mr. Choakumchild sadly reports to Mr. Gradgrind about poor Sissy Jupe that "after eight weeks of induction into the elements of political economy, she had only yesterday been set right by a prattler three feet high for returning to the question, 'What is the first principle of this science?' the absurd answer,

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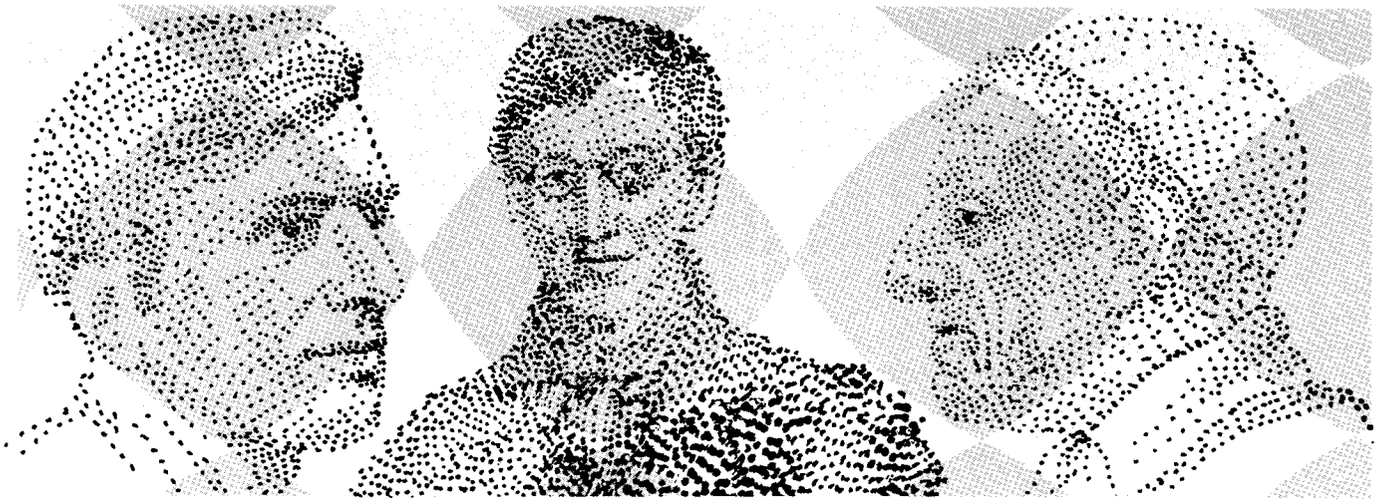

'To do unto others as I would that they should do unto me.'"

It was in good part because he concluded that the Anglican church was incapable of resisting the inroads of liberalism in its various forms that Newman became a Catholic. He saw in the church's hierarchical authority and powerful traditions an embodiment and instrument of the objectivity and internal consistency of divine revelation, a solid "given," standing over and against us with its own lights and claims. The defining "idea" of Christianity was the principle of Incarnation, and there had to be, somewhere in the world, a community and institution which continued the "personation" of the divine accomplished in Christ.

But if Newman bowed to few in the nineteenth century in his insistence on the principle of authority within the church, he insisted from the beginning of his Catholic life on a view of that principle which set him apart from many in his new community of faith. The *Essay on Development* was suspect for a century because it took history seriously and argued for evolutions at a time when doctrinal integrity was still being identified with immutability. His first close contact with Roman theologians left him appalled by their philosophical eclecticism and historical ignorance. He deplored the sectarianism and apocalyptic catastrophism characteristic of the reign of Pius IX. "We are sinking into a sort of Novatianism....Instead of aiming at being a worldwide power, we are shrinking into ourselves, narrowing the lines of communion, trembling at freedom of thought, and using the language of dismay and despair at the prospect before us, instead of, with the high spirit of the warrior, going out conquering and to conquer."

An exclusive exaltation of authority was leading to a neglect of natural gifts, not least of them, the "cultivation of mind." There was, he said, "no exercise of the intellect. No, the system goes on by the tradition of the intellect of former times." He postponed for years the publication of the *Grammar of Assent*, because he expected it to be misunderstood. "Our theological philosophers are like the old nurses who wrap the unhappy infant in swaddling bands or boards—put a lot of blankets over him—as if he were not healthy enough to bear wind and water in due measures. They move in a groove, and will not tolerate anyone who does not move in the same."

During Vatican Council I, his conviction that "you must prepare men's minds for the doctrine" provoked his anger at the "aggressive and insolent faction" which first sought to force on an unwilling church the widest and least defensible definition of papal infallibility and then dismissed as simple disobedience the genuine difficulties of a Döllinger. "Every consideration, the fullest time should be given to those who have to make up their minds to hold an article of faith which is new to them. To take up at once such an article may be the act of a vigorous faith; but it may also be the act of a man who will believe anything because he believes nothing, and is ready to profess whatever his ecclesiastical, that is, his political party requires of him. There are too many high ecclesiastics in Italy and England, who think that to believe is as easy as to obey—that is, they talk as if they did not know what an act of faith is. A German who hesitates may have more of the real spirit of faith than an Italian who swallows."

Newman once offered the following rueful account of the origin of much of his work: "There are those among us...who for years have conducted themselves as if no responsibility attached to wild words and overbearing deeds; who have stated truths in the most paradoxical form, and stretched principles till they were close upon snapping; and who at length, having done their best to set the house on fire, leave to others the task of putting out the flame."

If Newman shared with many Catholics a repudiation of liberalism in religion and society and also an insistence on the principle of authority as a needed counterbalance, he disagreed with many of them on the interpretation of that principle and on its adequacy to meet the challenges of the day. What, then, did he offer as a personal response to the wider crisis and as an effort to make the church better able to meet it?

The first element of his response was the ideal of a liberal education he set out in *The Idea of a University*. The "cultivation of the intellect" which he considered to be the necessary and sufficient end of education was also the critical ability needed if Catholics and others were to be able to withstand the spread of opinions and values Newman believed to be greatly inadequate to the human condition.

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Secondly, he offered as a specifically theological response the construction of a "true philosophy of religion." The *Grammar of Assent* offered one of the first attempts at what is today called "the turn to the subject," an analysis of the concrete processes of reasoning and believing to justify the option of Christian faith.

Thirdly, he struggled to make his own church a society in which such "real assent" could be more likely. Exclusive appeals to authority were fatal: "You cannot make men believe by force and repression. Were the Holy See as powerful in temporals, as it was three centuries back, then you would have a *secret* infidelity instead of an *avowed* one—(which seems the worse evil) unless you train the reason to defend the truth." Churchmen must recognize the vital and communal presuppositions of their own authority: "A Catholic is kept from scepticism, not by any external prohibition, but by admiration, trust, and love. While he admires, trusts, and loves our Lord and his church, those feelings prohibit him from doubt; they guard and protect his faith; the real prohibition is from within. But suppose those feelings go; suppose he ceases to have admiration, trust, and love, of our Lord and his church; in that case, the external prohibition will not suffice to keep him from doubting, if he be of an argumentative turn."

In the preface to the third edition of the *Via Media*, Newman described the concrete life of the church as a dialectical interplay between the theological or doctrinal, the sacerdotal or devotional, and the political or hierarchical elements. All three were essential, he argued, but they were also in tension with one another, reflecting "conflicting interests," and it was crucial that no one of them be isolated out of the living whole and erected into the all-determining principle.

In his own time, he believed, "the devotional sentiment, and the political embarrass the philosophical instinct." The knowledge of church history which made this analysis possible also gave him lessons in patience. "Pius is not the last of the popes," he reminded a correspondent distressed by Vatican I; "Let us be patient, let us have faith, and a new pope, and a reassembled council may trim the boat." That patience at once permitted and was confirmed by a wonderful intellectual courage, a great confidence that in the end truth would prevail, which enabled Newman to be such a champion of intellect and defender of its freedom.

The great statement of principle in *The Idea of a University* is often quoted, that the believer "is sure, and nothing shall make him doubt, that if anything seems to be proved by astronomer, or geologist, or chronologist, or antiquarian, or ethnologist, in contradiction to the dogmas of faith, that point will eventually turn out, first *not* to be proved, or, secondly, not *contradictory*, or thirdly not contradictory to any thing *really revealed*, but to something which has been confused with revelation." Perhaps less often noted are the principles that will guide the representative of the "imperial intellect" in his investigations: "If he has one cardinal maxim in his philosophy, it is, that truth cannot be contrary to truth; if he has a second, it is that truth often *seems* contrary to truth; and, if a third, it is the practical conclusion, that we must be patient with such appearances, and not be hasty to pronounce them to be really of a more formidable character."

Brilliant paragraphs follow in this essay on "Christianity and Scientific Investigation" on the concrete, dialectical, and collaborative processes by which the human mind reaches the truth. His argument displays an analysis, rare in its nuance and discrimination, both of the elements of intellectual inquiry and of the responsibilities of religious authority when such inquiry touches upon matters of faith. And the more experience Newman had in the course of his life of the absence of such nuance and discrimination in the face of unparalleled intellectual challenge, the more determined he became to resist the efforts to restrict the "elbow-room" of Catholic scholars.

He pressed the issue in almost all the great works from the *Apologia* to the end of his life. The last chapter of the *Apologia* responded to the enthusiastic and indiscriminate authoritarianism of men like William George Ward and Cardinal Manning. The chapter includes a powerful defense of the doctrine of infallibility, but so far from granting the Protestant claim that this power paralyzes the intellect, Newman argued that it represents one of the principles necessary for the dialectical acquisition of religious truth. Authority and private judgment he presented as "alternately advancing and retreating as the ebb and flow of the tide." Catholic Christendom is "a vast assemblage of human beings with willful intellects and wild passions, brought together into one by the beauty and the majesty of a superhuman power, into what may be called a large reformatory or training-school, not as if into a hospital or into a prison, not in order to be sent to bed, not to be buried alive, but (if I may change my metaphor) brought together as if into some moral factory, for the melting, refining, and molding by an incessant, noisy process, of the raw material of human nature, so excellent, so dangerous, so capable of divine purposes."

If infallibility itself did not destroy the work of human intellect, Newman went on, it was not to be expected that lesser exercises of church authority would. He insisted that the theological element in the church needed the counterweight of the "devotional" and the "political" elements; and he never had much patience with the dogmaticians of freedom for whom *Fiat justitia et ruat coelum* (Though the heavens fall, let justice be done!). But he reserved his severest words for those who refused to sympathize with people troubled by the problem of reconciling revelation and science. The liberalism of his youth, Newman said, was no longer simply one party among many; "it is the educated lay world," and people were "in danger of being led away into a bottomless liberalism of thought." How could one not sympathize with "religious and sincere minds, who are simply perplexed—frightened or rendered desperate, as the case may be—by that utter confusion into which late discoveries or speculations have thrown their most elementary ideas of religion. Who does not feel for such men? Who can have one unkind thought of them? I take up in their behalf St. Augustine's beautiful words, '*Illi in vos saeviant,*' etc. Let them be fierce with you who have no experience with the difficulty with which error is discriminated from truth, and the way of life is found amid the illusions of the world." Newman's correspondence abounds with efforts to address those

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who came to him with such perplexities.

At the heart of Newman's response to the demands his world placed on his church were a remarkable intellectual integrity and honesty and a no less rare faith and trust. Under the present pontificate the cause for Newman's canonization has made more progress in a decade than in the ninety years previous. A year ago the Reverend Vincent Blehl presented the Vatican with a huge dossier making the case for Newman's sanctity; and there are some rumors that good news can be expected this summer.

I do not know how Blehl made the case, but one of the reasons why a good number of people would welcome Newman's being raised to the altar is a "heroic virtue" which is not only rare but, at least in recent centuries, seldom canonized: what might be called "intellectual courage." One has the impression with Newman, as with Aquinas, that he did not fear a page he ever read nor ever feared to read a page.

To this courage were joined an evangelical patience and modesty. Newman knew that he was only cooperating in what was, after all, God's work, not his. "I may have opened a vein of metal," he wrote, "which others may work out after I am gone." "What I aim at may be real and good, but it may be God's will that it should be done a hundred years later."

Such reflections remind us of the lines from "The Pillar of the Cloud:" "I do not ask to see / The distant scene,—one step enough for me." He entitled one of his early sermons "Waiting for God," and that was a guiding-principle of Newman's life, reflecting the spiritual depths from which his intellectual honesty and freedom drew and confirming his conviction that Christian faith frees the mind and heart towards hopes and realms of light which we otherwise could not even imagine. □

STRIKE ONE, YOU'RE OUT

THE COURT BENCHES LABOR

GEORGE G. HIGGINS

In early 1983, the twenty-four hundred workers—mostly Hispanic—who worked in the mines and smelters of the Phelps Dodge Company in Clifton, Douglas, Ajo, and Morenci in Arizona had some reason to feel that they had won a small share of the American Dream. Most of them were longtime members of the United Steelworkers or one of twelve other unions, and over the years they had won a living wage and a measure of security on the job at Phelps Dodge. Unlike thousands of other Hispanic workers in the Southwest, the Phelps Dodge workers, through their unions, had achieved working conditions which enabled them to live decent lives and raise their families in some comfort.

Six months later the dream turned into a nightmare. Phelps Dodge management, demanding severe concessions in negotiations for a new contract, refused to budge, and the workers felt they had no recourse except to go on strike. Almost immediately it became apparent why Phelps Dodge had been so unyielding during the negotiations. The company quickly recruited permanent replacements for the strikers from the reservoir of unemployed Hispanic workers in the Southwest and, with the help of the Arizona National Guard, resumed full production. More than two thousand workers suddenly found that a legitimate strike had cost them their jobs and twelve months later, after a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election in which only the strikebreakers could vote, it also cost them their unions—permanently.

The workers at Phelps Dodge have not been the only victims of this tactic. In Tennessee, thirteen hundred workers on strike at Magic Chef lost their jobs permanently; at three plants of the International Paper Company, the same fate befell twenty-three hundred members of the United Paperworkers Union; and at Eastern Airlines, nine thousand machinists lost their jobs forever when they tried to resist the efforts of Frank Lorenzo, the airline's chairman, to force their conditions down to nonunion levels.

What has happened to industrial relations in the United States? Have we changed our laws to permit industrial leaders like Frank Lorenzo to destroy the job conditions and working standards won by his workers? What are the consequences for collective bargaining, for the right to strike, and for the labor movement as a whole? To answer these questions, it is necessary to start with a look at the nation's first comprehensive labor law, the National Labor Relations Act (also known as the Wagner Act), passed more than fifty years ago.

Before the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935, the right to strike was uncertain, with courts ruling that striking workers retained only some (and frequently none) of their employee rights. A key provision in the Wagner Act granted workers the statutory right to strike. Although the Wagner Act guaranteed the right of workers to strike for better wages or because of unfair labor practices, the United States

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Supreme Court, just three years later, handed down a ruling which, years later, had a near fatal impact on the right to strike. The ruling is known as *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Mackay Radio and Telegraph Company* (304 US 333).

The *Mackay* case centered on the fate of permanent replacement workers following a major strike at Mackay Radio and Telegraph Company. After several days, many of the strikers conceded defeat and asked to return to work. Mackay maintained that the replacement workers had first priority to keep their jobs. Ultimately, Mackay reinstated the strikers, with the exception of four, whom the company perceived as union leaders.

After a union appeal to the NLRB on the grounds that the four were denied reinstatement because of their support for the union, the NLRB ordered Mackay to reinstate the workers with back pay. A ping-pong series of appeals, reversals, and new hearings followed, with the NLRB, the U.S. Court of Appeals, and even the Supreme Court becoming involved in this and parallel cases.

Finally, the Supreme Court took up the *Mackay* case directly. In one of its most confusing decisions, the Court unanimously held that: (1) the strikers did remain employees under the Wagner Act and were entitled to strike over economic matters and thus were entitled to their jobs when they returned to work after the strike was settled; and (2) the Court further found that Mackay had committed an unfair labor practice by discriminating against the union activists. But then, in a footnote—which has all the force of law—the Court also ruled that employers had the right to try to keep their businesses going during a strike. If their only recourse was to hire permanent replacements for the strikers, that was their right, too—thus negating the strikers' claim on their jobs when the strike ended.

For more than forty years, American management generally ignored the implications of the *Mackay* decision. The right to strike—without fear of reprisal—was too deeply ingrained in our national ethic, and few employers dared to override it. But the dam broke in 1981, partly under the impact of President Reagan's firing of twelve thousand air traffic controllers, which was reinforced by the generally anti-union atmosphere spawned by the Reagan administration. (It is ironic that the air traffic controllers, as public employees, are not covered by the *Mackay* decision). The tide rose throughout the decade of the 1980s, reaching the point where workers and union leaders now have to think twice about using their right to strike, even in the face of the most intransigent management bargaining tactics. In 1986, the Bureau of National Affairs, a Washington-based research organization, found that three-quarters of the 181 unionized employers it polled would consider using permanent replacements for strikers.

There has been no serious argument in recent years that an employer does not have a right "to protect and continue his business" during a strike, although the use of replacement workers clearly undermines the economic pressure which striking workers seek to impose on management. But, for economic strikers in the 1980s who wished to return to work, *Mackay* had a devastating effect. It caused them not only to risk losing their jobs, but to go through a complex process if they wished reinstatement.

Today, strikers must first make an unconditional offer to return to work. Once the worker has submitted an application to resume his or her old job, management must offer a position "which is equivalent or substantially equivalent" to his or her former job, *unless her or she has been permanently replaced*, or unless there are legitimate business reasons not to do so. In other words, short of actions which a court rules are overt punishment for union activity, there are virtually no sanctions against an employer who uses this opportunity to rid a company of its unionized workforce. Since permanent replacements for economic strikers become eligible to vote in an NLRB election after one year (while economic strikers lose that right after the same period of time), an employer need only operate with replacement workers for twelve months before a decertification election can be held.

While a patchwork of state and local laws limiting the right of employers to hire permanent replacement workers exists, they are more likely to hinder the hiring of such replacements than they are to prevent such hiring entirely. Furthermore, under the doctrine of "preemption," local labor relations laws yield to the national laws. It was an original intent of the Wagner Act that the NLRB be the national labor arbiter. Therefore, most state laws can only restrict the way in which employers may locate and hire replacement workers. Once such a hiring has taken place, federal regulations—with all of their loopholes—preempt most state and local laws.

Mackay ensures the continued feeling among workers of no job security, the weakening of labor influence at the bargaining table, and the real potential loss of jobs when workers choose to exercise their right to strike as provided by the Wagner Act. As workers face these realities, the courts have continued to strengthen management's position with decisions allowing businesses to go on the offensive when strike activity is suspected, and to weaken the original intent of the Wagner Act.

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America is virtually the only industrialized country, along with South Africa, that permits this abuse of workers. Firing strikers in most European countries is either banned outright, or is a practice which does not exist. Only in South Africa do workers face the prospect of losing their jobs permanently when they go on strike—and South Africa is not a country with which the U.S. normally likes to be compared. A South African labor leader, after a visit to the U.S. in 1989, asked: "In my country when we strike we are fired. In your country you are permanently replaced. Tell me, what is the difference?"

Employers know the result of hiring permanent replacement workers, and most who do so are not motivated solely by the need to keep their businesses operating, but by a desire to get rid of the union and its collective bargaining rights along with the union workforce. As Congressman William L. Clay (D-Mo.) has remarked, "In recent years as employers have not hesitated to give away the jobs of striking workers, repeatedly, we have seen communities torn apart as replacements move in to take the jobs of the existing workforce." As David Silberman, associate general counsel for the AFL-CIO, has observed, "It means, as a practical matter, when workers have to decide whether to strike, the downside risk is not just that they're going to lose the strike but that they're going to lose their jobs."

Mark Kirby

Baptism

We are fighting against the last minutes
of day. The air is changing color
around us. Silence is falling. The balls
explode off the strings. Silence frames
the ebb and flow of the make-believe war.

Around us houses are large and living, eyed
with bright windows, breathing with voices.
The street picks up the hiss of car-tires
and it becomes a liquid wash, rhythmic,
oceanic, sliding into extinction.

After the last shout, when we are grey
as dusk, we collect our things, thoughts
stolen from the future. A game is on
the radio. We do not need to listen.
The water of our sweat excuses everything.

The weakening of the right to strike for workers has implications for all of us, and indeed for democracy itself. Although the right to strike is not listed in the Bill of Rights, it cannot be denied that the right to withhold one's labor is as essential in a democratic society as the rights we celebrate in the first ten amendments to our Constitution. If we had any doubts about the importance of the right to strike in a democratic society, the experience of Poland during the past decade should be a useful lesson. The members of Solidarity would be the first to testify that their nation could still be under an authoritarian government but for the willingness of Solidarity union members to put down their tools and leave their factories.

The exploitation of the *Mackay* decision by employers also has implications for the future of collective bargaining. The basic purpose of collective bargaining is not to create big winners or big losers; it is a time-tested and supremely democratic way of settling differences between employer and employees through compromise. When collective bargaining reaches an impasse—which it does very seldom—workers' only resort is to strike. The theoretical justification of the strike is to put equal pressure both on the workers—who are without income—and on the company—which is without production. When settlement is achieved—again, presumably without any big winners or losers—the workers are entitled to retain their jobs.

Permanently replacing strikers upsets the entire balance between the bargainers. During the collective bargaining process itself, workers who fear that they may be replaced if they strike are not likely to bargain very forcefully or effectively. The mere threat to replace strikers gives the employer an advantage in the collective bargaining process. And the strike itself becomes an almost useless weapon if workers are immediately replaced. In short, instead of negotiations between two equals, the collective bargaining process becomes a weapon which the employer may manipulate to his own ends, including destroying collective bargaining and the union itself.

For the consumer, strikes can be a serious inconvenience, especially, for example, in the transportation industry (although the law gives the president power to suspend a strike in cases of real emergency). But for several decades after the passage of the Wagner Act, the average consumer was not willing to allow inconvenience to change his commitment to the worker's right to strike. It is evident that during the 1980s, under the pressure of industrial managers determined to defeat their unions, that national respect for the right to strike suffered a severe erosion.

Today the labor movement has begun a major campaign to recapture the right of workers to withhold their labor without penalty. Bills have been introduced in both House and Senate to overturn the unintended result of the *Mackay* case, and it appears that despite the probable opposition of the Bush administration and some elements of business, there will be considerable support in Congress. The unions are also reaching out to their traditional allies—such as religious, civil rights, and community groups—to help them in their battle. They deserve our support. Most of us in the religious community would endorse an effort to preserve the right to strike, free of fear, in the knowledge that it is important not only for workers but for the community as a whole. □

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A NEW OLD WORLD

CENTRAL EUROPE WAITS & WATCHES

MARGARET O' BRIEN STEINFELS

Arguably, experts and scholars visiting Central Europe these days don't notice things that mere tourists find striking. For example, nature. In June, we observed its profuseness. There is the green and intensely cultivated countryside. Fields of wheat and barley and vegetables are dotted with brilliant red and yellow flowers. There are deep, cool woods enclosing the roads. There are pristine passes through mountains that look like our own East Coast ranges. In Czechoslovakia the fields stretch endlessly, the landscape of collective farming—the only successful example among Eastern bloc nations and one which farm workers seem reluctant to dismantle. In Poland small plots form a patchwork quilt—the legacy of generations of division and subdivision that withstood the mania for collectivized agriculture and may also withstand the cajoling of agronomists who now say that so many small parcels are inefficient and unproductive. But amidst such green profusion it is hard to imagine anyone will starve.

The second problem with a June visit is related: warmth, sunshine, and the endless stretch of Northern evenings. Warsaw and Berlin are at 52 degrees latitude, the same as northern Newfoundland. The sun lights and cheers streets that have so few shop windows or enticing signs and advertisements. And the day lasts and lasts and lasts with light enough until 10 P.M. for seeing the sights or searching out unpronounceable street names, letter by letter. Indeed the light is sufficient to show that at least on the surface nothing seems quite as bad as the Western press has reported. These are not, after all, third-world countries, but more like France in the early sixties.

The roads though single-lane get us from here to there with adrenalin surging as we pass large trucks; gas is available and cheaper than in Western Europe. Though city traffic is thick with taxis, buses, motorcycles, horse-drawn hay wagons, and more private cars than expected, it moves. Phones work within a certain compass: local phone calls without difficulty; intercity with delays; international in the middle of the night. There is a rundown air to beautiful Prague, historic Cracow, and bustling Warsaw, but there is no litter; there are no beggars or people sleeping on the streets; drunks, of whom many are to be seen in Warsaw, stagger upright and purposefully to some destination other than a doorway or the side of a building. These, of course, are the clichés of Soviet rule, and perhaps capitalism with its packaging and individualism will change that, but perhaps these have all along been and will continue to be the clichés of Mittel Europa.

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The economic shambles of the Eastern economies is doubtless real: what were once world-class Czech motorcycles, Polish freighters, East German assembly line systems cannot compete on the world market by the assessment of their own managers. Banking systems are rudimentary. In East Germany, banks from the West moved in wholesale to provide financial and consumer services. Others will not have this problem solved so dramatically or so efficiently. But world markets, financing, infrastructures are abstract concepts invented by economists to explain how capitalism—the theory—works. In the midst of June and its abundance, the traveler remembers that in different forms, capitalism existed in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, France, and the United States apart from a full-blown theory that described and harnessed its powers.

Capitalism existed in personal and interpersonal relations, in specific kinds of behaviors and forms of organization, in patterns of manufacture, trade, and distributions, even in denominational ties (as Max Weber observed), long before it existed in theory. And it is this microeconomics—the little ways in which economies function—that meets the eye in Eastern Europe.

At a portable table in Wenceslaus Square, young people sell the *International Herald Tribune* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* along with posters, buttons, books on the environmental crisis. They do it with alacrity and good cheer. No waiting! Czech-language newspapers in contrast appear in the arms of a solemn, single vendor and people queue patiently before him to buy a copy. Standing in line for newspapers or for wire baskets, which are required to enter grocery stores and book stores (the baskets also serve as a crowd-control device), is one of those old behaviors that the students' enterprising outlook will steadily undermine. In the stores themselves, shelves seem well-stocked although purchasing power has fallen. Between the old state-run and the new free-market restaurants, the most striking difference is not food or ambiance, but waiters and waitresses. In the old ones a remarkably skilled aversion to eye contact keeps them, seemingly engaged in other pressing tasks, at an ever steady distance from diners signaling for a menu or another beer or the check.

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In the new ones, there is friendliness and a willingness to explain the menu, even to make suggestions. But in both, a table once reserved is yours for the evening; in fact, it is yours before you ever arrive. Table turnover has not come to Eastern European restaurants; this is exceedingly civilized and exceedingly cost ineffective since there are always more people wanting to dine than tables available. A Polish friend mentions some handsome cotton shirts we have seen people wearing. They are brought by freighter from China on order from a Polish designer and sell briskly on the market. "We have always been good tradesmen," she says. Indeed, on the West side of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate the singular economic activity to be found on a Sunday in this staid city is the "Polish Market," where Poles, Turks, Gypsies have established a "free" market—open on Sunday and no doubt skirting other laws as well. Along the gravel path that was once the Berlin Wall, Turks are busy selling Russian and East German military hats and medals along with the slightly unusual novelty: a tuna-sized can containing "The last breath of communism."

But it is macroeconomics that the World Bank, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Economist* are talking about—the economic resources and performances of the whole society in relation to the world economy. Most ordinary Poles and Czechs agree that their economies are in a critical state, but they do not talk about distribution systems and financing, savings rate, or investment opportunities. When talking about

The church in an open society

In Communist Poland, the Catholic church was Solidarity's powerful and unstinting ally, Catholic magazines and newspapers were major alternatives to state-supported media, and parish churches provided social and cultural alternatives to party-sponsored activities. The debates and divisions of the church in Western Europe and the U.S. over the reforms of Vatican II, the role of the laity, and the birth control question rarely troubled the Polish church. What will happen as the people and clergy face life in a more democratic and open society?

Bishop Henryk Muszynski of Wroclawek and chairman of the Polish bishops' Commission for Dialogue with Judaism, acknowledged that the church faces new challenges. In a recent visit to New York, the bishop outlined Poland's need for a moral and religious renewal—even though it is seen by many as the most Catholic of countries. "Even more than the economy, personal values, Christian values have been destroyed by the Communists." He headed his list with abortion, which is widely available in Poland. Because it is legal, he believes many Catholics do not understand the moral issues involved. Then there is the work ethic—the willingness to work hard and seriously at one's job. Muszynski believes it has been lost in a work environment that degraded people's sense of responsibility for their own labor. "This is both a problem of conscience and a problem for the economy." The coming gap between rich and poor in a society where the majority were equally poor is a moral issue the church must address. Some people will do well not simply because they have capital, but because "they are willing to work hard and take risks, while others are not."

Also on the church's agenda: religious education, not just for Catholics, but for the Protestant and Orthodox minorities: "What we ask for ourselves, we must grant to others." Lay formation: "Of course, it has happened already with Solidarity. Lech Walesa made no secret of its religious motivation. But people have been trained to work within church institutions; now their real work is in the world." Restitution to the Jewish community: the return of sacred objects and books left for safekeeping with the church when Hitler invaded Poland. The bishop, who has been instrumental in negotiating the dispute surrounding the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz, told the American Jewish Committee's annual meeting on May 17: "I don't need to rehearse here the affair of the Auschwitz convent. I shall only ask, what we learned from the experience? First of all, we have learned that the Jewish sensibility is quite different from our own and that we must respect it even when we don't understand it fully. For Polish people the difference between the *Shoah* and the Polish martyrdom in Auschwitz is not so evident or as clear as it is elsewhere....

"It seems tragic that the victims of the same racial ideology, even if they have not suffered in quite the same way, should now contend with each other, accusing and slandering each other. While Jews stress the unique nature of the *Shoah*, Poles speak about their own martyrs. Jews, in a like manner, accuse Poles of a conscious effort to minimize or even to appropriate Jewish suffering.

"Our theological views of Auschwitz are also quite different....Jews see in Auschwitz the *Shoah*—absolute evil and we see the martyrdom of millions of innocent victims. For the majority of the Jews the only adequate answer to such an evil is silence; for us the only meaningful answer is always prayer. One thing is certain: we Jews and Christians must learn to know each other. And thus education appears as the only way to ward off and to make impossible a repetition of the Auschwitz monstrosity. This means education of all human beings in mutual respect and in true brotherhood. In such a country as Poland, almost entirely Catholic, this is now the first and most important task of our church...."

In keeping with his training as a Scripture scholar, in our interview the bishop summed up the current situation in Poland this way: "We have crossed the Red Sea without great losses, but now we need the engagement and patience to cross the desert." M.O.S.

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A FULL HAND

This year the Catholic Press Association awarded COMMONWEAL eight different prizes for excellence—more than any other journal in its class. The awards were for a broad range of achievement: editorial writing, poetry (2), review section, treatment of mission, personality profile, promotion, and general excellence. As the judges wrote: "COMMONWEAL is an outstanding forum of American Catholic reflection on issues ranging from politics to cinema to spirituality."

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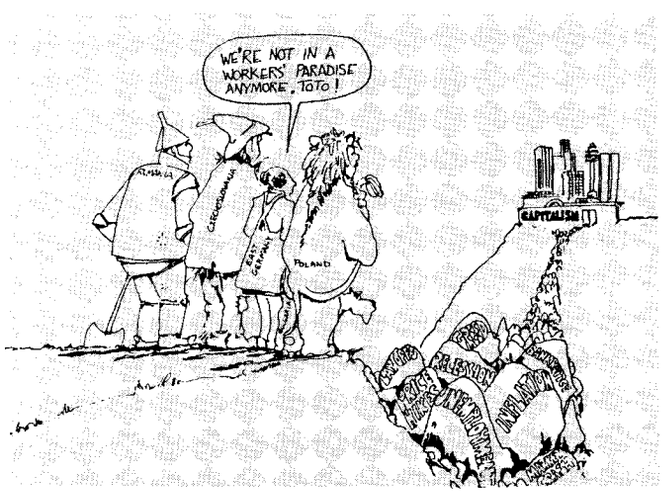
the economy, people mostly talk about—people. And what they say is that "people are waiting—waiting to see what will happen."

Vaclav Maly, the young Czech priest who last November acted as spokesman for the Civic Forum, offers a moral and spiritual explanation: "People see responsibility outside of themselves. For forty years, changes were always made by others. Recent changes are still very superficial, they must have deeper roots. We need a politics from below; it is not enough to have a good president. We need democratic structures to protect personal freedom." But he did not wait. He has turned from politics to parish life. "My role is to be below, to help develop the spiritual, to help the people remember personal responsibility for the common good." (The 10 o'clock Mass at St. Gabriela's in Prague where Maly is pastor bears proof of his intent. It is standing-room only amidst a crowd that spills out the door. The congregation is attentive, even absorbed in the intense preaching of their pastor on the Trinity, in his few words to the children, in a baptism, in prayer and song, and in Communion which he personally gives, dipping Host in chalice, to each communicant.)

Or people wait, in the opinion of some, because they are unprepared for the pace of change and do not want to work hard. Eva Berberyusz, a Polish journalist (and *Commonweal* contributor) reports, "A university student cleans my house once a week. She is very good and very poor. She could clean five houses during the summer vacation and help her family, but she prefers to go off to visit relatives in Germany." Youthful insouciance, genuine slothfulness, or greener grass? Berberyusz works very hard indeed and by her report so does the student's mother. And those small plots of land in the country are assiduously tended. In mid-June half the population of Poland seemed to be out haying—cutting, stacking, turning, carting. Still, unemployment is expected to grow. But Berberyusz sums up a story she has written for the new Warsaw daily edited by Adam Michnik, *Gazeta Wyborcza*: "Unemployment, there is none. There are only people unwilling to take the jobs available. I pass the employment office in my neighborhood frequently. The boards are filled with cards. I walk in to look and people grab me to ask if I am interested in this or that job."

Henryk Wozniakowski, former editor of the Catholic monthly, *Znak*, and now deputy government spokesman, smiles at the glowing report of his visitor. Yes, Poland is beautiful. But "we never know how bad things are in Poland. Things are not so bad as they appear in statistics. But that does not mean that things are good. Housing remains a disaster in the cities. There is no credit system and young people have no hope of buying their own flat." One legacy of the gray market, the quasi-legal and illegal methods by which affairs were conducted under the Communists, is that people are not used to paying taxes. "This is dangerous for civic morality," says the government spokesman. He sums up with a little joke about the shadow economy, "All Poles spend twice what they have and give the extra to the church."



Though "waiting," and its implied passivity is a consistent theme of conversation, "hesitation" or "reluctance" better captures the slightly anxious state of uncertainty. After all, everything is up for grabs, the economy and the political system, the legal and the social welfare system. The tasks of reframing foundational public institutions are enormous.

Poland and Czechoslovakia must write new constitutions, state enterprises and "collective" properties have an ambiguous status, members of the old regime continue to hold important bureaucratic and managerial positions as many Czechs and Poles will mention, democracy and pluralism though stoutly defended are barely living memories from prewar days. Embedded in the resolution of these issues are potentially explosive questions of normalizing church-state relations, of doing justice without destroying the peaceful pace of change, of meeting the need for private property while protecting the common welfare. The revolutions in Central Europe remain astonishingly free of recriminations and punitive measures against party members, informers, collaborators. Perhaps Vaclav Havel's observation, "We are all responsible," has stayed the hand of revenge. Perhaps the peaceful course of events in Poland, Czechoslavkia, and East Germany has engendered a level of empathy conducive to a mentality of forgive-and-forget. Still, a sticker on an East German car echoing Havel, "We are all Stasi" (the East German security police) seemed to invite a brick through the window.

The social consensus that forced the overthrow of the Communists, though frayed, remains intact, and for the moment, people resist talk of official political parties and opposing platforms, although nascent forms of parties, including Christian Democratic and Nationalist ones, have emerged. Political maneuvering prior to Czechoslovakia's June election and the continuing conflict between Lech Walesa and Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki in Poland signal the inevitable break-up of this consensus. But for the moment that consensus and the popular trust placed in leaders like Havel and Mazowiecki are seen as surer guarantees of emergent democratic and pluralistic institutions than a rapid and full-blown development of partisan politics likely to be linked to single-issue politics in Poland or separatist tendencies in Czecho-Slovakia.

People understand that a common enemy kept them united; its disappearance is fraught with both opportunities and dangers. Their hesitation may be prudent, even necessary. Sharp moves

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in one direction, for example, the wholesale return of confiscated property to the church, to businesses, to individuals will dislocate major institutions and may encourage resentful countermeasures. Who knows better than Communist party bureaucrats and managers the real ins and outs of offices and businesses? But who knows better than they how to siphon off "public" assets into a privatized economy? Would their quick dismissal serve the public interest? So in the midst of a beautiful (and apparently bountiful) summer, Eastern Europeans hesitate.

On Saturday, June 9, the second day of the Czechoslovak elections, a great crowd gathered in the Old Town Square of Prague before the twin steeples of the Tyn church to attend a concert of Bedrich Smetana's "*Ma Vlast*"—"My Country." The seventy-six-year-old Rafael Kubelik, exiled from his native land in 1948, has returned to lead the symphony orchestras of Czechoslovakia's constituent republics, Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia. The stage stands before a blue backdrop on which it is written: *Pravda Vitezi*—truth prevails. The crowd stands first through a rehearsal, then through a rain shower, then through the ninety-minute concert. The quiet, the patient, the attentive waiting seemed a national act of meditation on the past certainly, but also on the future and the most fundamental kinds of questions: How shall we live? How shall we care for one another? □

Brian Murphy

The Fox

A blue toothbrush on the sink
Where you left it weeks ago,
Like a magnet weakly pulling
Calls you back into my home.

Remember when we stood together
On the darkened promenade,
Lights danced easy on the water—
Easy words were all we'd known.

But sitting there one greying morning
Coffee spilled and food half gone
I held you hard for fear of talking
What we spoke went bone on bone.

I dare not speak the words of lovers
Down on this withered river side,
Measured cups are all I've bartered
But you released the wall-high torrents
Drove the tree-roots through the tide.

Tied in knots from long ago
The stricken fox gnaws at its paws,
Escapes the torment of the snare,
Leaves behind a bloody trail
Sinks in grass, I find you there.

STAGE

ASPECTS OF DESIRE

'ELLIOT LOVES' & 'PRELUDE'

There was a time when avant-garde aggression was popular in the theater, when a light in the eyes, a discordant noise, an invasion from the stage was supposed to shock the audience into awareness. More often than not, they were annoyed rather than enlightened. Shock in the theater works best when it grows out of character and theme. There is a moment in Jules Feiffer's *Elliot Loves* when an exasperated Elliot walks across the room (upstaging the conversation that is irritating him), pours a tumbler of whiskey, and hands it to his alcoholic friend Phil, demanding that he drink it and cease being the bore that AA had made of him. There is more wonder than pain on Phil's face, as David Pierce finely plays him, but in the audience there is a mass intaking of breath. We are all used to the amiably bibulous host who insists on pushing drinks on guests who do not or cannot drink, but this is a gesture which pulls the cover off Elliot's distress and shows the murderous possibilities buried within the nice guy.

Elliot is a typical Feiffer character, baffled by love and the complications that it entails. He is middle-class, reasonably affluent, articulate, witty, but what it is that he actually does for a living I cannot remember. There is some joking about how Joanna and he met, having to do with a complaint that he pretended to rectify, but he does not need a career. Like those figures who stand alone in Feiffer cartoons, revealing themselves as they talk, he has angst, not an income. In fact, *Elliot Loves* begins with such a separate figure, Elliot, in a spot, delivering a long monologue about the wonderful woman with whom he has fallen in love (perish the word!). Anthony Heald, in another of the excellent performances he has been piling up in the last few years, does a marvelous job of the set piece—its uncertainties, its sudden bursts of enthusiasm, its indications of self-pity and self-flagellation.

Elliot has found the perfect woman, but she does have a tendency to repeat grating taglines ("Don't let it get to you"; "piece of cake"); these provide too easy laughs as the play goes on. In contemplating the marvelous Joanna, he indicates how his ability to love is beset by doubt, guilt, and the suspicion that nothing can be as good as this seems. Even so, he is going to introduce her to his old school chums, and that event (test) fuels the rest of the play. There is an hilarious scene that a momentarily confident Elliot and a very nervous Joanna (Christine Baranski) play at the elevator before she decides not to go to the dinner. There is the party itself at which Elliot refuses to be comforted and, then, after Joanna belatedly arrives, becomes furious when she charms his friends by being whatever best suits them. The last scene is a telephone conversation in which an angry and tearful Elliot and an angry but relenting Joanna manage to keep

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connected, if just barely.

Tony Walton's impressive sets and Paul Gallo's lighting contribute to the effectiveness of the scenes, but I am not sure I understand the design of the last one. Above the heads of the couple, there is something that looks to me like a stained-glass window. Were Feiffer, the cartoonist, and his visual colleagues trying to tell me something that the words barely hinted at? Did I imagine the effect? Go see for yourself. Even if there is no stained-glass window, you will find a fascinating play with a decidedly Feifferian view of love.

The revelatory glass of whiskey in Craig Lucas's *Prelude to a Kiss* has nothing to do with character; it is a plot device. Separated from his new wife, Peter goes to the bar where Rita used to work and sees, at a table, an old man—who had appeared uninvited at their wedding—sipping at what has already been identified as Rita's tipple. Following this clue, Peter discovers that Rita is inside the body of this old man and the old man is presumably the unfamiliar person who made a stranger of Rita on their honeymoon. We are in fairy-tale land. Rita and the old man exchanged selves during a kiss he gave her at the wedding, and it is not until Peter can bring himself to kiss Rita by kissing the old man that the body switch reverses itself. One of the nicer touches in the play is that Rita's parents cannot see the difference between the two Ritas, their perception of their daughter having always been a touch muzzy. The true lover, on the other hand, can recognize his beloved in whatever guise and—since Lucas's romanticism is not hobbled by Feiffer's doubts—can love her in whatever form. On the surface, *Prelude to a Kiss* is an amusing comedy with a happy ending. There are undertones, however. *Prelude* offers a positive answer to that Old Beatles' question about will you still love me when I'm sixty-four. Beyond that, as Lucas's AIDS film *Longtime Companion* (directed, as most of Lucas's plays are, by Norman René) indicates, it need not be age that changes the beloved. In *Prelude to a Kiss*, "love is not love which alters when it alteration finds." Elliot would have a little trouble with that.

GERALD WEALES

SCREEN

TRIVIAL PURSUITS

'TOTAL RECALL' & 'DICK TRACY'

Watching the only bedroom scene in *Total Recall* (which must have received its R rating for violence, not sex), I understood why so many female friends have made disparaging remarks about Arnold Schwarzenegger's body. Arnold's amorous partner, Sharon Stone, seems to be exerting herself less like a passionate lover than like a mountain climber. She seems to be climbing *past* Schwarzenegger's muscles to get at a lither, more compact man dwelling within the pumped-up Austrian. Similarly, within the bloated mass that is *Total Recall,* I sense a lithe, viable sci-fi thriller.

The basic situation is actually rather compelling. A decent construction worker with a loving wife and mild ambitions learns that his background, memories, and attachments have been invented, and that his body—furnished with this fictitious identity—has been sent to earth on an evil mission by his real personality, a nefarious operator on Mars. The hero revolts against his mission but, in doing so, revolts against himself, the real Schwarzenegger back on Mars. The results on screen are violent, mindless, scummy. None of the discoveries the hero makes about himself produces any noticeable emotional effect on him or, consequently, on us. Schwarzenegger is allowed to show some bewilderment in the first half-hour but from then on is simply used by the filmmakers as a heroic killing machine.

Total Recall is one of those movies in which we not only see innocent bystanders picked off during gun battles but are treated to the sight of their bodies being used as shields—by the hero. Director Paul Verhoeven gives us close-ups of the dead bodies being stepped on by pursued and pursuers, making squishing sounds as they are trampled. After a barrage of firefights, neck-breakings, throat-piercings, and eye-gougings, a little throw-away moment when Schwarzenegger turns to a rescuer and says with disarming simplicity, "Thank you, Tony," comes as balm in Gilead.

Seeing *Dick Tracy* soon after *Total Recall*, I was reminded that it's worthwhile to discriminate—even among trivialities. *Total Recall* is trivial and disgusting. *Dick Tracy* is trivial and lovely. It charms you, sings to you, teases you, yet sends you out of the theater satisfied: it lets you know that its creators don't consider you to be a moron, a sadist, or a sucker. While there are plenty of crimes in *Dick Tracy*, the movie itself doesn't mug you.

Warren Beatty is producer, director, and star. In adapting a comic strip to the screen, he sets necessary stylistic limits for himself and then observes them. What damaged the sometimes interesting *Batman* and utterly destroyed Robert Altman's *Popeye* was the uncertainty of their makers about what they were doing. Altman worked so hard to make his live-action film look like a comic strip that he failed to give it dramatic propulsion. There were moments in *Popeye* when I felt that the camera had been left running between takes and that we were watching the actors amuse themselves while waiting for the director to return from a story conference. *Batman* was better in that it had a fairly straightforward script, great sets, and an enlivening performance by Jack Nicholson. But Michael Keaton seemed dominated by his costume and gadgets. His Caped Crusader was vaguely drawn, a construct of incompatible concepts: gee-whiz good guy and neurotic vigilante. The former was meant to please the kids and rake in bucks; the latter to hook the critics and earn the moviemakers respect for their artistry. The result was a basically simple-minded, sometimes kinky, often fuzzy movie that made a lot of money.

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Warren Beatty isn't seduced by complex machinery or artistic pretensions. He knew exactly what he wanted to make and has achieved it: the glamorization of unmixed virtue and the juiciness of unadulterated vice. Pauline Kael long ago remarked on the hint of slyness in Beatty: "...there seemed to be something going on in his mind, some kind of calculation...something shrewdly private in those squeezed-up little non-actor's eyes...that didn't fit the clean-cut juvenile roles." Now that he is once again playing a clean-cut character (*in excelsis*!), he has kept that look of calculation but, during his love scenes, subtly transforms it to portray self-inhibiting scrupulousness. When Tracy is awkwardly working himself up to propose to Tess, he keeps darting appraising looks at her, tries to read how she reacts to what he says before he says it, gets flummoxed, gives up. But, moving against criminals, Tracy is liberated, the gleam in his eyes becomes manic, and his body moves forward in a dynamic line that is worthy of his magnificent yellow overcoat. When this Tracy knocks six villains off their feet with one sweeping punch, you believe it: how could an army of crooks stand up to a man so perseverant in whatever he undertakes that he hurries back to an interrupted performance of Wagner's *Ring* to see how the story turns out?

Twenty years ago, the infinitely angular Glenne Headly would never have played a heroine in an action film, but would have been cast as a librarian or schoolmarm. It is to Beatty's great credit that he could perceive how touching Headly might be even in the stalest of situations, such as the scene in which Tess catches Tracy allowing himself to be vamped by Breathless Mahoney. Not beautiful yet strangely magnetic, Headly, like Maggie Smith, brings to mind the older, often forgotten meaning of the word, "homely." She is piercingly plain, poignantly unpretentious. You want to *come home* to her and so you understand why Tracy eventually does.

As the premier menace, Big Boy, Al Pacino pulls off an innovation: the villain as whiner, as handwringer, as nagger, as obsessive neurotic. This is a heavy who never gloats, who never enjoys himself, who is filled with self-pity. Pacino's make-up twists his lips, pocks his face, broadens his nose, and renders him virtually unrecognizable except for the one Pacino feature that is indelible even when covered by contact lenses. Yes, those moist, pleading, *Dog Day Afternoon* eyes stare out at the world, begging it to be reasonable (even as he tries to corrupt it), beseeching everyone not to resist him (even as he plans the murder of anyone who does), and trying to instill guilt in anyone who does resist (so that he or she will die regretting having hurt Big Boy's feelings). Fleeing Tracy's latest onslaught while tightly gripping the abducted Tess, Big Boy wails, "I don't know why I take the trouble to do some good in the world. Nobody seems to care!"

Madonna's Breathless Mahoney was written in such a way as to allow the pop singer to do her latest variation on Marilyn Monroe's masochism—"you don't know whether to hit me or kiss me; I get a lot of that"—but tempers it with something else: a bitterness that is willing to bide its time. This is a Monroe who has come back for vengeance on all those men who used her as a plush toy. But even Breathless's minimal complexity is rendered in cartoon terms, so determined is Beatty to keep his film consistent in scope and tone. "Aren't you going to frisk me?" she asks Tracy in a dress that both cantilevers her bosom and threatens to abandon it. Vittorio Storaro photographs her in such a way that light and shadow seem to caress her curves, even when the virtuous Tracy abstains. Material Girl has become Varga Vision.

Although Beatty keeps *Tracy*'s characterization to comic-strip dimensions, he has given the movie the pace, ambiance, and music of a Broadway show. Tracy himself is Cop as Superstar, his glorious deeds trumpeted by headlines and Winchellesque radio announcers. Big Boy, coaching his nightclub cronies, momentarily transforms himself into a cliché Broadway director ("Pick up the pace, girls!"). Stephen Sondheim has written good songs for Madonna and she sings them as Patti LaPone sang the Cole Porter score in the Lincoln Center revival of *Anything Goes*: not as an attempt to reproduce thirties vocalization but as an adaption, a glitterization (if you'll pardon the barbarism) of the old style for our times. (Alas, the nonvocal music only shows that composer Danny Elfman has listened too many times to Nino Rota's score for *La Strada*.)

What Madonna has done with Sondheim's songs, Beatty has done with the whole Dick Tracy ethos: he hasn't reproduced the strip's Grand Guignol excesses but has rendered the action as a pipe dream in which violence is nothing but ballet, and the Big City is a huge set for the biggest musical comedy that never was.

Dick Tracy isn't a great new work of cinematic art. It isn't even a great minor work of art. But it is the next best thing: an ingenious, gleaming toy. And I still like toys.

RICHARD ALLEVA

MEDIA

FOODSCAM

ONLY THE FAT ARE FREE

My concern here is with food, and the way we sell food. Did you see the commercial, that ran for about a year, for a very popular brand of margarine? A middle-aged, handsome fellow sitting at his kitchen table tells us how he exercises regularly, etc., but how—trouble in paradise—he went to his doctor and found that his cholesterol count was too high (expression of high anxiety); cut to his wife, carrying a plate of salad and explaining that then they began to eat more

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sensibly, with low-cal meals and margarine; and cut back to husband, with wife smiling at his side, telling us that *last* time he went to the doctor his cholesterol count was down two points.

The message is clear, and deeply distressing: eat our food, and you will not die. Have cereal with lots of fiber, says Wilfred Brimley, because—and he's an old guy and he's still alive—"it's the *right* thing to do." Drink Evian bottled water and you might look like one of the living slabs of cheese/beefcake in their epicene commercials. Buy Weight Watchers TV dinners and share the secret of metabolic metamorphosis with the defiantly svelte Lynn Redgrave: "*This*"—with a toss of the head—"is *living*!"

Truer and sadder words were never spoken, or at least not spoken in my memory. This *is* living, or at least the imitation of living, that *they* want to impress upon you. Food used to be sold on the theory that eating was *fun*. As recently as the great Wendy's "Where's the Beef?" commercials, the theory was still in force, although with an ominous undertone: Clara Pelter, the little old lady who croaked the now-famous question, was obviously close enough to having achieved her allotted fourscore and change years that she could *afford* to eat for enjoyment. Now that Clara is gone, the only character on TV who still eats because he *likes* to eat is Morris the Cat.

And Roseanne. Surely it means something that, while we as a people become weight- and nutrition- and harmful-substance-conscious to the point of neurosis, the smash of the 1989-1990 season is the ongoing parable of a couple who could, between them—or maybe not even between them—counterbalance an Audi. *Why* are Roseanne and Dan Connor the Rob and Laura Petrie of the Iranscam generation?

I think it is because we *are* the Iranscam generation. Eating disorders—bulimia, anorexia—have become some of the trendier feelgood issues of the last decade, featured on talk shows, news specials, and even made-for-TV movies. Obsession with food, we have been told by any number of psychologists and specialists, has little to do with food itself and a *lot* to do with the victim's sense of being out of control of his/her life altogether. Can't we extend this idea from the latest recovering teen bulimic on Phil or Oprah or Sally to our life as a nation and the most sensitive register of that life, the Tube?

The Reagan Decade was a period not only of unbridled waste and greed, but also—if you checked out the evolution of advertising, and especially advertising about food—of stunning narcissism. As we consumed more, depleting God knows how much of the planet's nutritional *and* atmospheric substance, we also worried more and more about what we, personally, took into ourselves. Like something out of an especially grotesque medieval pageant, we were both bulimic *and* anorexic, consuming and fearing consumption at the same time. We ate yogurt out of styrofoam cups.

I suggest that at this point in our history we feel about as out of control of our public fate as a "free" people can. Hopelessly in debt, governed by scoundrels and incompetents of our own choosing, and over whose betrayals we can hardly anymore muster even anger, and living in a messy, malodorous room—planet Earth—whose disarray is also mainly our own doing: in a fairly serious sense, we *are* the naughty, frightened teen anorexic on Oprah. And like him/her, in our despair we concentrate our attention on the one thing that seems still within our control: what we put into our bodies.

How unhappy we are—poor little rich kids—and how ill-equipped to deal with our unhappiness. We love to watch the Connors, fat Roseanne and fat Dan, just because they are losers: they make weekly compromises with the squalor and untidiness and infantilism of their lives, and they spend a lot of time remembering that things were once different, and wondering what went wrong. And they are *fat*: so they are perfect scapegoats, free, like classical fools, to act out the failure of control the rest of us keep trying to work off or sweat away or starve out with the pounds. If *Roseanne* never sees another season, it will have been an important moment in TV history: the perfect ritual for America at a crucial and low point in its career. On the lower frequencies of the spirit, it will have sounded the bass chord for the high-level, frenzied and self-loathing gluttonies of the Trumps, Boeskys, Helmsleys, and—yes—cabinet members. *Mangia!*

FRANK McCONNELL

'People power'

Santiago, Prague, Manila, Tiananmen Square, Berlin: in recent years, all have been sites of nonviolent protests that have altered the face of history and raised the credibility of nonviolent direct action as a powerful political force, sometimes of revolutionary scope. "People Power," set to air on PBS's "P.O.V." (Point of View) on September 11, looks at the practical accomplishments of nonviolent struggle in such situations, contrasting it with the present strategy of the *intifada* in Israel's occupied territories. There, Palestinians have overcome decades of fear to confront Israeli occupying forces. But because of the *intifada*'s reliance on rock-throwing, the Palestinians have not been able to engage a broad section of Israeli public opinion with the moral claims of their right to self-determination.

Director Ilan Ziv provides dramatic footage of the Philippine ouster of Marcos, clandestine protest movements in Pinochet's Chile, and interviews with families at the heart of the *intifada*. Gene Sharp, an authority on nonviolent struggles, provides the philosophical chassis on which the program proceeds. The failures of nonviolent struggles are not glossed over. Bishop Francisco Claver of the Philippines remarks that nonviolent reform has yet to be institutionalized in the ongoing political life of his country.

"People Power" is one brief "point of view" on this powerful social lever that is beginning to move political institutions in all parts of the world. From Sharp's presentation, it is clear that this single program could be expanded into an entire series.

P.J.

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Sixteen enigmatic words

ARTICLES OF FAITH, ARTICLES OF PEACE
James Davison Hunter and Os Guinness, Editors
The Brookings Institution, $22.95, 163 pp.

THE CHRIST CHILD GOES TO COURT
Wayne R. Swanson
Temple University Press, $27.95, 242 pp.

Francis Flaherty

Five North Carolina lawyers sue a judge who opens court with a daily prayer. The Supreme Court says Oregon does not violate Indians' rights by banning peyote, a hallucinogen used for centuries in their rituals. The new bishop of Brooklyn takes a jab at Mario Cuomo over abortion. And a Los Angeles couple charged with prostitution protest that they are merely practicing their religion, in which, you see, "absolution" is based on sex and "sacrifice" entails the payment of money.

From the serious to the silly, all these developments unfolded during the few weeks I was reading these two volumes about religious freedom. The coincidence proves how pressing and pervasive questions of religion are in this secular age.

This belief was the spur for *Articles of Faith, Articles of Peace*, a collection of essays written by law and government professors from Harvard, McGill, and the like, and presented at a symposium on the Constitution's bicentennial. The book is not just a civics-class exercise in constitutional basics, however. Its tone is urgent. Its contributors believe that such social changes as the multiplication of faiths in the United States and rising religious intolerance make understanding the First Amendment's Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause more important than ever.

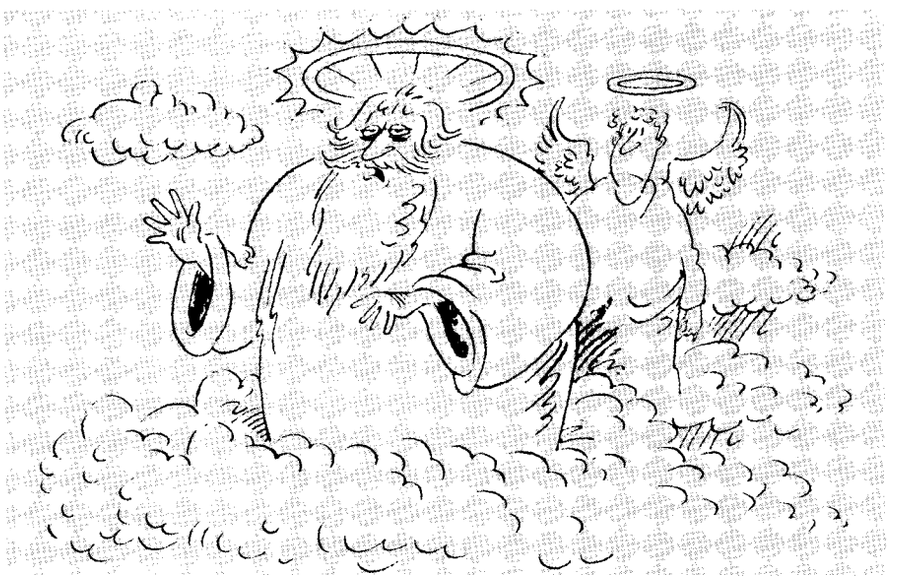
This concern is widespread. More than two hundred scholars, lawyers, and politicians—spanning the ideological spectrum from Strom Thurmond to Elie Wiesel—have signed the Williamsburg Charter, which is appended to this volume. Also published for the Constitution's bicentennial, this document "sets forth a renewed national compact...on how we view the place of religion in American life and how we should contend with each other's deepest differences in the public sphere." The diverse authorship of the charter necessarily means it does not confront the thornier church-state issues. But it strongly affirms basic church-state principles, and its diversity of signers dramatically demonstrates the tolerance and high purpose to which the charter commendably aspires.

In contrast, the essays in *Articles* get down to the nitty-gritty of constitutional and social debate over religion. But explaining them requires a brief constitutional primer:

The two religion clauses, the most enigmatic sixteen words in the Constitution, broadly mandate a separation of church and state. Such separation is vital, the theory goes, because religious persecutions and other tragedies have proven the church-state mixture to be explosive. The clauses also attest to the dignity of the individual conscience; they draw a line the state cannot cross.

The clauses impose two duties on government: to be neither a boon to, nor a burden on, religion. The Establishment Clause focuses on the former. State aid to parochial schools, Sunday-closing laws, and a Christmas crèche display in a public building are typical topics under that article. The Free Exercise Clause orders the state not to interfere unduly with citizens' religious practices. Representative cases involve general state laws that collide with a particular faith's practice. May Christian Scientists, for example, be constitutionally required to submit to vaccination laws?

The Supreme Court has had great difficulty with these questions, particularly



"It's not fair. I can't zap anybody these days without being accused of political bias."

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over the Establishment Clause because it implicates basic issues of governance. Establishment Clause theorists coalesce around two polarities, one "conservative" and one "liberal," or, in legal argot, "accommodationist" and "separationist."

The former is amply represented in *Articles*, with several essayists competently arguing for the basic accommodationist position. Its tenets include a strong belief that religion has played a major role in the psyche and history of the United States. Religion ramifies throughout society and government, from the Ten Commandments depicted on a Supreme Court frieze to "In God We Trust" on our coins. It simply cannot be completely excised from the public sector, accommodationists say; and to do so would violate our basic nature.

Moreover, if religion were so excised there, there might well be a "bleeding of the public domain of all significance," in one writer's words. The worry is that the U.S. will be morally impoverished and normless when strict separation, secular humanism, and the liberal focus on the individual rather than the state combine. The country will not be a community.

Some *Articles* essays decry secular humanism as the established religion of our time, and wonder why its influence is not seen to violate the doctrine of church-state separation. Others mourn one baleful effect they see of separationists' Establishment Clause doctrine—the loss of religious institutions' aid in education, welfare, and other public tasks.

Not all the essays take these tacks. For example, University of Virginia Professor William Lee Miller cites evenhanded evidence that both religious and secular feelings—the Bible *and* the Enlightenment—influenced the nation's founders. His essay rebukes the many liberal and conservative partisans who cite only self-serving proofs, thus doing violence to historical truth. And other essays touch on accommodationist ideas but take no final position.

But, generally, the book features more of the conservative viewpoint, albeit well-reasoned and well-written, than of the separationist perspective. There are no meditations on religious persecutions and violence or the debasement of religion accompanying its melding with the state. To my separationist mind, in a world of Beirut and Belfast, of ayatollahs and anti-Semitism, these are the main issues.

That is, the dangers of excessively separating church and state pale compared to the dangers of separating them too little. A person may be chagrined when "ACLU types" force the removal of a crèche from the county courthouse at Christmas. I find the social damage minimal; let him view the crèche in church. Too, separationists do not demand state hostility to religion; they value some accommodation. And I find accommodationist fears of losing public norms and community cohesion to be suspiciously nostalgic and too speculative compared to the reality of, say, anti-Semitism. Of course, full explication of these issues is beyond the scope of this review.

That said, I recommend the book highly. It will profit readers of all constitutional inclinations.

The Christ Child Goes to Court is a useful study of *Lynch* v. *Donnelly*, a 1984 Supreme Court case upholding the display of a crèche by the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Written by a Connecticut College government professor, the book is geared to college students. It takes the reader from A to Z in the dispute, and interspersed throughout are mini-lectures on the role of the judiciary and the like.

Lynch, the first of a parade of cases featuring government-sponsored crèches, menorahs, and other religious symbols, has been sharply criticized. Despite what dissenting Justice William Brennan called the "singular religiosity" of the crèche, the 5-4 Court held it did not promote religion enough to violate the Establishment Clause. Though a major accommodationist victory, the case spurred even conservative commentator James J. Kilpatrick to opposition. □

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

WILDLIFE
Richard Ford
Atlantic Monthly Press, $19.95, 224 pp.

Raymond A. Schroth

In its very first sentence—"In the fall of 1960, when I was sixteen and my father was for a time not working, my mother met a man named Warren Miller and fell in love with him"—Richard Ford's impatiently awaited new short novel, *Wildlife*, both tells its own whole story and recalls most of the major themes of Ford's four other works, particularly *The Sportswriter* and his recent book of short stories, *Rock Springs*. Once again, though without repeating himself, he recreates in the most intimate detail three seemingly month-long days in the lives of otherwise faceless men and women who struggle to survive the pains of anonymity, failure, infidelity, and family disintegration, in a middle-class mini-saga which mirrors the pain and chronicles the minor redemptions of America at large.

In "Empire," the longest and most intriguing story in *Rock Springs*, Vic and Marge Sims, crossing the northwest on a train, peer out into the night at a wild fire burning on the open prairie. It is a fire which Vic imagines "could turn and sweep over them in a moment, and they would all be caught, asleep and awake." With the ambiguity of any resourceful symbol, the fire is both a projection of their own relationship—their passion, Vic's faithlessness—and the terrible heat of larger events—the forces of nature, providence, and chance over which none of us has any control.

In *Wildlife*, the fire is back. Forest fires have been raging all summer in the Rocky Mountains just sixty miles beyond Great Falls, Montana, the boring frontier to which Jerry Brinson, a thirty-nine-year-old golf pro, has transported his wife Jean, thirty-seven, and son Joe, sixteen, from Lewiston, Idaho, with the false hope of somehow cashing in on the Gypsy Basin oil boom.

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Imagining that "small people like him" were making money in Montana, he wanted "a piece of that good luck" (reminiscent of *The Ultimate Good Luck,* the title of Ford's second novel) "before all of it collapsed and was gone in the wind."

But Jerry—a handsome, smiling man with delicate hands and a short fluid swing—though "innocent and honest" in the eyes of his son, is neither successful, lucky, nor strong; he is fired from the golf club for stealing, cleans out the cash register on his way out, then impulsively leaves his family for three days to join the army of men—many of them vagrants—fighting the forest fires on the distant mountainsides.

Jerry is barely out the door when Jean, who begins to sip whiskey with new regularity, brings home the hulking Warren Miller, a businessman in his late fifties whose wife has left him. He's all the things Joe's father is not: unathletic—he limps, a Dartmouth man, a thirty-third-degree Mason, a successful entrepreneur who flies his own plane. Things "happen around him," the mother says.

We witness the family's apparent incremental disintegration through the eyes of young Joe, who, thirty years later, seems to recall every whisper heard through the walls, every toilet flush, and the smells of tobacco, cold ashes, and hair oil, as vividly as if it had all happened the night before. He is a credible and disarming witness for us, a scrupulously honest, soft-spoken, lonesome adolescent who quietly adores his weak father and longs for him to return, but somehow both loves and tolerates his mother as she unwinds.

Though *Wildlife* could well have been called *Great Falls*, evocative as it is of the Montana landscape where Ford, until recently, has made his home, the title is probably inspired by the occasionally mysterious birds and animals who appear as counterparts to principal characters.

Warren Miller tells Joe that he once opened the window of his plane to listen to the honking of a flock of geese who flew alongside. The night Joe's mother carries on with Warren Miller and Joe is afraid that their lives are now "out of all control and out of all sense," he spies a magpie in his "white with frost and moonlight" yard which flies into the light of his flashlight and leaves him with his heart pounding. And his father reports that while fighting the fire he saw a live bear, which had climbed a hemlock tree, catch fire—a startling image that foreshadows *Wildlife*'s odd dénouement.

If *Wildlife* has a problem, it's in the ending. Ford's first two novels wind up in violence; the third, *The Sportswriter,* with the suicide of a secondary character and its thirty-eight-year-old, divorced narrator dallying with a college girl. *Wildlife*, filtered through the recollection of a sixteen-year-old's perceptions, with its glimpses of guns, its mounting tension, and its intensified picture of Miller as an ominous, lurking, destructive creature, prepares us for a final conflagration.

What Richard Ford delivers is both less dramatic and more true than what he has cleverly led us to expect. His morality—insofar as a novelist can indirectly propose a moral system—is one of self and mutual acceptance, of living with sin, but not denying the true meaning of the word. Ford's mid-America is a nation of fractured families trying to deal with fires—whose loves and lesser bonds are all flaming relationships which, like the prairie and forest fires, "smoke and smolder on for a long time ... hard to put out." Relationships in which both the potential firefighter and potential arsonist dwell equally in us all. □

MODERN CHINA: STILL TO COME

THE SEARCH FOR MODERN CHINA
Jonathan Spence
W.W. Norton & Co., $29.95, 876 pp.

CHINA RISING
The Meaning of Tiananmen
Lee Feigon
Ivan R. Dee, $19.95, 269 pp.

Nicholas R. Clifford

Jonathan Spence is one of the most interesting writers in America today. Never mind that he is an Englishman, or that he teaches Chinese history at Yale. After publishing a highly respected monograph on Qing dynasty administration, he has since experimented with the writing of history in a variety of narrative styles. Books like *Emperor of China, The Death of Woman Wang, The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci,* and *The Question of Hu* have enriched both our knowledge of the past and our appreciation of the way in which a serious historian can use an imaginative literary approach while remaining faithful to his sources.

Surveying the last four hundred years of China's history, his new book uses a more conventional form. It is a historian's book, which is to say it presumes that China today cannot be understood without a knowledge of China yesterday. Jules Michelet believed 1789 to be such a watershed in French history that school children would never again need to learn what happened earlier; but today we are more likely to remember de Tocqueville's view that the great Revolution simply acted as a catalyst for certain tendencies already present in the old régime. Spence is firmly in de Tocqueville's camp; without diminishing the importance of the changes that take place, say, with the end of empire in 1912, or the victory of communism in 1949, he is as interested in the continuities of culture and society that have remained over the recent centuries.

Spence's search for modern China begins around 1600, when the Ming dynasty was staggering to its fall, and his subject throughout is *China's* history, rather than a China seen through Western eyes, or a China that simply responds to the actions of others. Of course foreigners play their role—European and American businessmen, advisers, and missionaries, Japanese intellectuals and military men, and others. But Chinese history has its own autonomy, and Spence's work is a useful corrective both to Chinese chauvinists who blame their nation's ills on foreign influ-

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ences, and to Western chauvinists of both the right and the left who argue that their policies, for good or ill, somehow have determined China's experience (President Bush reflects this view, when he says that we must not drive China back into isolation, as if it were somehow within our power to do so).

Yet history not only helps us to understand the present; it also takes us out of the narrow parochialism of our own experience, opening our minds to the diversity of other peoples and other times. Through the novels and plays of the time, Spence shows both the brilliance of late Ming and early Qing high culture and its obliviousness to the problems of ordinary men and women; we catch a foreshadowing of our own academic circles in those early Qing intellectuals who responded to the growth of popular education by developing "new modes of cultured expression that were out of the reach of almost everyone else." Spence examines Lin Zexu, whose war on drugs in the 1830s was doomed when he took on the foreign opium traders; writers like Lu Xun and Ding Ling, facing the struggles of the twenties and thirties; and the spokesmen of the emerging democracy movement since Mao's death, like Liu Binyan and Fang Lizhi. His splendid eye for detail catches the dangerous glory of the Qianlong emperor at the end of the eighteenth century, whose pronouncements give the air "of a man who has been praised too much and has thought too little, of someone who has played to the gallery in public life, mistaken grandeur for substance, sought confirmation and support for even routine actions, and is not really equipped to make difficult or unpopular decisions." Or take his description of Chiang Kai-shek's wedding to Song Meiling in December 1927, "an event that encapsulated many of the crosscurrents roiling Chinese society": Chiang still married to his first wife, going through a Christian ceremony at home, performed by the head of the YMCA, and a Chinese ceremony in Shanghai's Majestic Hotel, performed by Cai Yuanpei, the Confucian scholar turned Nationalist revolutionary. Yet this is by no means primarily an intellectual history as was Spence's earlier *Gate of the Heavenly Peace*. The book is equally strong on social and economic history, drawing on recent scholarship, introducing the reader to G. William Skinner's division of China into geographical macroregions, or examining the effects of demographic change in the late Qing and the People's Republic. His publisher has done well by him; Norton has produced a handsome book, with superb illustrations, almost fifty maps, and many tables of social and economic data.

About two-thirds of the book covers the twentieth century, or more precisely, the period since the foundation of the Republic in 1911. Spence avoids the simplistic dualisms that have characterized so much writing about China: nationalists against Communists, pragmatists against revolutionaries, for instance. He traces the various currents of thought—social Darwinism, anarchism, liberalism, nationalism, fascism, and communism—that went into the turmoil of the twenties and thirties. Like many recent historians, he takes a more nuanced view of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist China than was common ten or fifteen years ago, recognizing its accomplishments as well as its failures (in fact, one might wish that he did more with modern Taiwan, a significant economic power in today's world). Ignoring conventional divisions, he treats as a whole the years of war and revolution from the Japanese invasion of 1937 to the mysterious death of Lin Biao (Mao's heir turned traitor?) in 1971.

After that came the new "open door policy"—an opening begun not by Deng Xiaoping, but by Mao himself, and which has accompanied Deng's economic reforms. Two years ago, Spence might have ended his book on a cautiously optimistic note. Today that is no longer possible. "I am always ready to think the worst of my fellow countrymen," wrote Lu Xun after warlord troops massacred forty-seven demonstrators before the Tiananmen in 1926, "but I could neither conceive nor believe that we could stoop to such despicable barbarism." After June 4, 1989, his words are still to the point. The search for modern China—by Chinese as well as foreigners—continues. Jonathan Spence has given us a splendid guide to that quest.

The tragedy of Tiananmen is the subject of Lee Feigon's book. Feigon is also a historian, author of a study of Chen Duxiu, the first leader of the Chinese Communist party, and he was in Beijing last spring until just before the tanks went into the city. Underscoring the importance of the Cultural Revolution twenty years ago in destroying the legitimacy of party and government, he gives us a vivid picture of a China careening out of control in the late eighties. He argues that the first demonstrations were the work of serious graduate students at People's University, men and women who knew their history and believed that the party could and should be reformed. They lost control, however, to tens of thousands of younger students and other demonstrators, men and women deprived by Beijing's educational system of any knowledge of their country's past, and hence with tragically little understanding of how much they resembled earlier antigovernment demonstrators in both their strengths and their weaknesses. History would have taught them how futile it was to hope that particular individuals, particular factions, in the government could bring about the reforms they wanted, for men like Deng, Li Peng, and their colleagues were concerned only with maintaining their own interests. Hence their willingness to turn to violence, and to beat Beijing into submission. It is a bitter story, and though the book shows a few signs of hurried preparation, this is by far the best treatment of the episode that I have yet seen. □

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PLAYING FOR KEEPS

FINDING FAULT
Michael O. Garvey
Thomas More Press, $10.95 paper, 200 pp.

Paul Baumann

After reading Michael O. Garvey one hesitates to imagine what the other six redoubtable Garvey siblings are up to. Curing cancer? Piloting the space shuttle? Quarterbacking for the Chicago Bears? Caring for Mother Teresa? Doing advance work for Mario Cuomo's presidential campaign?

We know what Michael's older, more Orthodox brother John does. He writes brilliantly for this magazine. The more hirsute, and seemingly less abstemious, Michael writes a column for the *National Catholic Reporter*. To pay the rent he runs interference for America's number-one football team. In other words, he works in the public relations department at Notre Dame. As the resumé indicates, he's good at juggling the sacred and the profane.

Finding Fault is a collection of Garvey's most recent and more provocative essays. I found it immensely congenial. Truth be told, I have difficulty wading through a newspaper whose headlines run something like: "Pope Steals Eucharist; Won't Give It Back," "Vatican II: The Second and Improved Coming of Christ," and "U.S. Eats Third World for Lunch." So I've often missed Garvey the Younger in his unnatural habitat at the *NCR*. Then I read his recent column demurring from the reform agenda of a widely publicized petition sponsored by Chicago's Call to Action. At last, I sighed, here is a man after my own cramped and stony heart.

Finding Fault, with its insinuating title, further confirmed this view. Garvey has a sharp eye for what he calls fuzzyism, and a deep suspicion of those Catholic reformers who confuse alterations of the symbolic architecture of faith with the imperative to good works. He knows that reducing religion to ethics is like limiting the study of novels to an explication of grammar. It takes the life and spirit, not to mention the fun, out of things. "There [is] a great deal more to Christian life than being the kind of character Michael Landon always plays on television," Garvey writes in guardedly acknowledging the legitimacy of some of Cardinal Ratzinger's worries. Garvey suffers mightily—sinning against charity in the process—fulminating about the "barely trained airhead with a master's in divinity who will require your attendance at a week's worth of evening slide shows about waterfalls and wheat." He is not fooled by antiquarianism or Ratzinger's tone-deaf spiels on American decadence, but neither is he seduced by the myth of progress or the infallibility of American virtue. In short, he possesses "an understandable longing for the days when Catholics used to paint mustaches on the face of the Zeitgeist instead of taking it so seriously."

Garvey does many things well. He can make distinctions: between therapy and liturgy; lay ministry and beer parties; dissent and real courage; the *New York Times* (our "breezily secular magisterium") and the truth. He has a sound Catholic horror of homilies and he even, bless him, hates cats. He also can make connections:

"I've been king and I've been prince and believe me, king is better."

between faith and sanity; love, sex, and children; U.S. policy and murder in El Salvador; liberation and duties. Like most columnists, Garvey is a miniaturist. Unlike most, he really looks at the small, seemingly insignificant things around him. Sitting in his back yard on a hot summer afternoon watching his kids romp in the plastic pool, he moves effortlessly from domestic particulars to theology. "He is wholly happy, and his hands are as dirty as his children's. It's one of the gifts of marriage: costly fidelity yields up invaluable fruit. Babysitting becomes magic; necessity becomes blessing; duty becomes joy."

What was it Mother Garvey mixed with the Wheaties to create such an attentive son, such a prize spouse? There is much to praise in this collection. An edgy and especially subtle piece about a reunion with old prep school friends in New York City has Hoosier Garvey sniffing suspiciously at the shallow cosmopolitanism around him. "Adveniat Regnum Tuum" achieves an almost Chestertonian sense of the connections between the Christian story and all romance and adventure. "Updating Opus Dei's Penance Rites" is a glorious spoof and rebuke of those orthodox pruderies that confuse asexuality with celibacy and holiness, and kinky asceticisms with spiritual achievement. Garvey never lets us off without a laugh, and he can turn a phrase with agility and grace.

At the author's encouragement, however, let me be captious for a moment. Garvey rightly celebrates the transcendental virtues of family life. He is a courageous patriot of the kitchen, the playroom, and the back yard sprinkler. It is a welcome and needed voice. But for most of us the transubstantiation of the ordinary is not, alas, as reliable as *ex opere operato*. Our incontinent wills, as well as the world, are made of less tractable stuff. There's sloth, envy, pride—and then there's always failure.

Do not misunderstand; Garvey is no Pollyanna. But he is, thank God, a believer. His deepest instincts may prove unintelligible, or even somewhat smug, to the uninitiated or the skeptical. But that is a minor reservation. More important, Garvey conveys a rare sense of faith as a gift safeguarded and handed down from one gen-

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eration to the next, and as something he takes great delight in helping his own children unwrap. His stubborn, cagey Catholicism is reminiscent of Wilfrid Sheed's description of the "freakish religiosity" of his youth. In Sheed's evangelical home, Catholicism was something to take delight and joy in, not merely to pray over. That joy was the reward of risk. "Certain games have to be played hard, if they're to be played at all," Sheed wrote. Michael O. Garvey plays hard.

TOO LONG, TOO SAD, TOO BITTER

TITMUSS REGAINED
John Mortimer
Viking Penguin, $19.95, 281 pp.

Robert E. Hosmer, Jr.

Here we are, returned to the village of Rapstone in the Thames Valley, the locale of *Paradise Postponed* (1985), John Mortimer's acclaimed roman à clef about post-World War II England. Our previous visit was a much more satisfying excursion. Like that "promise of a hot summer, never to be fulfilled," *Titmuss Regained* does not fulfill the promise of *Paradise Postponed*. That earlier novel with its focal character of the Rev. Simeon Simcox, a liberal Anglican rector comfortably fixed with an income from a family brewery and given to joining every protest going, was a cynical but affectionate send-up of the marching leftie brigades, a literate social comedy at once amusing and terribly serious. In *Titmuss Regained*, Mortimer has taken a subplot from *Paradise Postponed*, the story of Leslie Titmuss, conniving and shrewd son of a brewery accountant, and made it the major plot. Now Conservative MP and secretary of state in the government, responsible for the Department of Housing, Ecological Affairs, and Planning (H.E.A.P.), Leslie Titmuss has but two more goals: the office of prime minister (denied him by the longevity of the incumbent) and a second wife (accomplished by his marriage to the vivacious and cultured Jenny Sidonia).

Titmuss and wife move into Rapstone Manor and Leslie feels a sense of full accomplishment for the first time in his life. But two clouds darken the horizon: the looming shade of Jenny's late husband, Tony; and the lowering shadow of a proposal to "develop" the valley into a suburban mall. How Titmuss deals with both threats is the stuff of plot for *Titmuss Regained*.

Mortimer renders the disparate worlds of politics, Oxford garden parties, seamyside London, and village life with convincing detail, while he works his way to a predictable conclusion with some interesting twists achieved by clever characterization and scenic design. And therein lie the strengths of what is at best a rather mediocre, familiar fiction: a cast of eccentrics; a number of vividly realized scenes; and some wonderful satiric swipes.

Mortimer's cast of "characters" comprise an amusing panorama, all the way from Leslie himself to Dr. Fred Simcox, a rather bumbling general practitioner and jazz musician; Dot Curdle, owner of a "rabbit hacienda" threatened by developers who want to turn her property into a parking lot; Hector Bolitho Jones, warden of the Rapstone Valley Nature Area, and his wife Daphne Bridgewater who leaves him for Barry Harvester, a local herbalist and "Trotskyite shopping-precinct huckster who sold nettle tea as a cure for arthritis."

From a cast that includes many more players, Lady Grace Fanner emerges a star; and indeed, after Mortimer creates her as "a pretty good advertisement for a diet of gossip, champagne, and cigarettes," he cannot resist crafting a comic scene which displays his finest talents: a sharp eye for human foibles; a keen ear for dialogue and precise comic timing; and a professional

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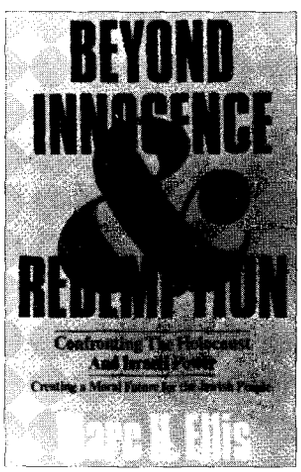
"Ellis helps us to imagine a new moral struggle of Jews, Palestinians, and Western Christians together against the inhumanity which lurks in all our hearts."
—*Rosemary Radford Ruether, author of *The Wrath of Jonah*

"A searching, haunting, and disturbing book that raises theological and human issues which must be confronted."
—Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, New York



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sense of stage movement. Chapter 2, which is entirely given over to the visit of the Rev. Kevin Bulstrode to the bedside of the ailing Lady Grace, is a stunning set-piece, and there are others, though they are somewhat attenuated and imperfectly rendered.

And certainly Mortimer's rapier is finely honed for swiping at everyone and everything in *Titmuss Regained*, not just Leslie the upwardly mobile Thatcherite, but Anglican rectors and their "modern" theology, land developers, newly-titled entrepreneurs of questionable honor and values, American student protesters, fervid environmentalists, ludicrous diet faddists, and scheming lawyers. In the end, nothing escapes; a cloud of negativity blankets all and the restorative function of satire is forgotten. An inevitable sadness and oppressive pessimism cloak this fiction.

Furthermore, *Titmuss Regained* is just too long and discursive, with digressions, excessive descriptive detail (particularly concerning landscape), prolix dialogue, and a surplus of "characters" who reinforce types, much in the fashion of Tudor drama, rather than becoming full-fledged individuals in their own right.

John Mortimer deliberately writes a traditional Victorian novel; not for him the innovations of those modernists Joyce and Woolf. But to read this novel is to be reminded of his betters—Dickens, Waugh, Spark. The gifts these novelists share—a keen ear for dialogue, a razor-edged delight in the puncturing phrase, a sharp eye for damning mannerism and foible, a compassion for the vagaries of the human heart and spirit—are matched by Mortimer. But in contrast to him, their narrative gifts are more than sufficient to tell a full story, and sometimes in far fewer pages. □

THE COST OF CONFUSION

THE MYTH OF HETEROSEXUAL AIDS
Michael Fumento
Basic Books, Inc., $22.95, 411 pp.

AIDS AND THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
Lawrence O. Gostin, Editor
Yale University Press, $35, $12.95 paper, 299 pp.

CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, & AIDS
Jeffrey M. Seibert and Roberta A. Olson, Editors
University of Nebraska Press, $19.95, 244 pp.

Eileen P. Flynn

In 1980, and before, there were persons living with AIDS and AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) as well as asymptomatic carriers of a viral agent capable of destroying the body's immune system. These people, however, went unnoted because the peculiar syndrome which afflicted them had not yet been identified. By 1985 their dreadful illness had been named, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which causes AIDS identified, and a test for safeguarding the nation's blood supply devised and put in place. In the past several years pharmacology and medical science have labored to develop both a vaccine and treatments to hold in check or reverse the ravages of HIV. So far, there is neither a vaccine nor a cure, and those treatments which are available are not easy to obtain and are only partially effective.

That is but a small part of the AIDS story. These three books address several aspects of the problem. Unfortunately, they offer useful information without fully examining the kind of motivation needed for a compassionate and comprehensive response to the plight of persons with AIDS. What are the motivational issues? I believe that the deeper questions attendant to AIDS are too easily avoided in respecting the pluralism which characterizes our society as well as in the cult of individual satisfaction to which both sexes, all races and classes are drawn. The moral and religious claims we humans and people of God may reasonably make on one another and the specific professional responsibilities health-care givers bear toward persons infected with HIV need to be articulated. Guidelines according to which genital intimacy is to be blessed or cursed, together with the rationale behind such limit setting, need to replace rampant confusion and permissiveness. At the same time, the absence of reverence for the sexuality of homosexual persons within patriarchal religious traditions should not be sidestepped. In addition, a dark side of the human condition which seeks to respond to boredom, or poverty, or emotional trauma, or physical craving by injecting drugs needs to be confronted. A commitment to treatment options for persons addicted to drugs ought to replace the fatalism and apathy which allow the scourge of drugs to cause the most heartbreaking AIDS-related deaths and births.

AIDS and the Health Care System is a collection of well-documented articles about issues of access to health care for patients infected with HIV. Many of the thorniest issues are probed. Do surgeons have a right to know whether or not patients are seropositive? Given the possibility of health-care workers contracting AIDS from accidents such as needle sticks, what liabilities do hospitals face? There is a one-in-three chance that an infant will contract AIDS from an IV drug-using mother. Are the odds sufficient to counsel abortion? Who should have access to experimental drugs, and when? And once approved, should the government step in to regulate the price? The unique medical needs of persons living with AIDS are detailed, and a case is made for providing for many of these needs in nonhospital settings. But no solution is proposed for the apathy and inaction of cities like New York in which an estimated eight thousand people who suffer from ARC and AIDS are counted among the homeless and receive virtually no medical care unless they find their way to an overcrowded emergency room.

Children, Adolescents, & AIDS is a collection of essays commissioned by the American Psychological Association that attempts to link medicine, public policy, law, and children's best interests. The book presents the research of the task force on pediatric AIDS. It is a very sobering volume, and is at its best when relating case reports of children with AIDS and their families. The suf-

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fering of children with a terminal prognosis and the stresses endured by their care givers are examined, as are the cultural factors which affect families coping with AIDS in locales as diverse as New York City, Miami, and Los Angeles. A discussion of how AIDS is experienced by young hemophiliacs and their families is also included.

Although there is much to recommend in *Children, Adolescents, & AIDS*, its limits are those of the psychological enterprise which strives to be nonjudgmental and value free. The following statement about AIDS education for adolescents is a case in point: "Adolescents ... are ... at risk for HIV infection because of the sexual and drug experimentation that is common in this age group. Many of the sexual and drug use behaviors that will later put them at high risk will be learned in adolescence. If safer behaviors can be learned before risky habits start, adolescents may be less likely to be infected as adults." My position is that educators are morally obligated to teach their students about the safer course—abstinence from sex and drugs—and how much more promise such a life holds. I think that it is irresponsible for adults to peddle condoms and sterile needles to teenagers instead of trying to stem the tide of permissiveness which jeopardizes them.

The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS by Michael Fumento is disappointing. Its tone is frequently sarcastic and condescending toward gay people. Fumento's main contention is that in the mid-1980s the media and politicians joined forces to propagate the notion that an AIDS outbreak in the heterosexual population was imminent. He says that the underlying motivation was to lessen the backlash against gay males, to secure funding for research, and to get heterosexuals worried and involved. Fumento succeeds in making the point that in this country heterosexuals who do not use IV drugs and who do not have sex with bisexuals have very little to worry about HIV, regardless of the number of their sexual partners. But the implicit sigh-of-relief which marks *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS* does little to advance the cause of designing a coherent response to AIDS and may do much to alienate people who should be working together toward this end. □

PRINCIPLES, FIRST OR LAST?

THE ABUSE OF CASUISTRY
A History of Moral Reasoning
Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin
University of California Press, $45, $14.95 paper, 420 pp.

James Gaffney

The authors' special interest in identifying and vindicating nonabusive casuistry was occasioned by their mutual involvement in a congressionally sponsored project seeking ethical guidelines for the use of human subjects in biomedical research. They were struck by the resemblance of the "case-method" they found themselves developing to the casuistic procedures of confessional guides and pastoral theologians. They were struck also by the remoteness of these procedures from what seem to be the underlying assumptions of public moral controversy over such issues as abortion, and from prevailing interests of moral philosophers as well. The congressional commission in which they formed these impressions comprised eleven members with a diversity of professional and cultural backgrounds, and their deliberations produced a paradoxical combination of practical consensus and theoretical discordance. They "were largely in agreement about their specific practical recommendations; they agreed what it was they agreed about; but the one thing they could not agree on was *why* they agreed about it. So long as the debate stayed on the level of particular judgments, the eleven commissioners saw things in much the same way. The moment it soared to the level of 'principles,' they went their separate ways."

What the authors appear to have derived from this experience is a firm conviction that concentrating immediately upon cases gets better results than applying commonly held general principles. They consider that approach to typify what they mean by casuistry. They consider casuistry, thus understood, to have a long, honorable, and underesteemed tradition. Much of the book is devoted to selectively reviewing that tradition and some of the criticism it has incurred. And it concludes with an appeal for the revival of casuistry in circumstances that favor its effectiveness.

It is hard to tell from this book what really went on in the congressional commission. Apparently cases were grouped on a basis of similarity, and participants tended to concur about how they should be dealt with, while differing widely as to their reasons why. The authors seem to have no doubt that the practical consensus was, in fact, correct, but they give us no reason to share their confidence, or even to understand what "correct" might mean to them in this context.

It is difficult to understand why the authors wish to apply the term "casuistry" to a procedure in which, it seems, particular cases came first, concrete solutions second, and general principles emerged (somehow) only afterwards. For the definition of casuistry they themselves cite is "that part of ethics which resolves cases of conscience, *applying the general rules of religion and morality to particular instances* in which circumstances alter cases or in which there appears to be conflict of duties (italics mine)." What the authors most oppose is what they call the "tyranny of principles," meaning by that a rigid and monolithic application of moral rules without sensitivity to the peculiarities of circumstances. If insistence on casuistry means only that in selecting and applying general principles one must be sensitive to the concrete circumstances of particular cases, the contention would seem indisputable but banal.

That the authors do mean more than that was implied from the start in their account of how their congressional commission proceeded. This further meaning gains clarity in the book's concluding pages where, in fact, they redefine casuistry. In words they cite from John Arras, "What differ-

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entiates the new casuistry from applied ethics...is not the recognition that principles must eventually be applied, but rather a particular account of the logic and derivation of the principles that we deploy in moral discourse." In their own words, this "account sees the primary locus of moral understanding as lying in the recognition of paradigmatic examples of good and evil, right and wrong: the typical cases of, for example, fairness or unfairness, cruelty or kindness, truth-telling or lying, whose merits and shortcomings even a small child 'knows at a glance.'"

But then, why not simply rely on practical moral wisdom to resolve concrete moral cases, and relegate the theories and principles to intellectual game-rooms housed in ivory towers? The classic answer retains its validity. Moral wisdom is not universally shared in any high degree and, even in those who have a lot of it, its acuity is frequently dulled by our passions and partialities. Principles offer guidelines to ensure some moral constancy over the variations of moral wisdom not only in societies but within each of their members.

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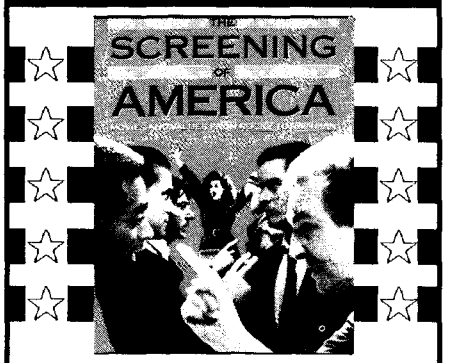

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Another answer, equally valid, has become more prominent in recent times. Some moral questions, of the utmost importance, are simply not reducible to cases that can be collected into sets of closely similar, readily comprehensible moral perplexities. These are questions about instituting, supporting, or modifying complex social arrangements and procedures, or practices whose ramifications are enormous. Here the basic tools of decision must be principles, and sometimes very broad principles, derived ultimately, it may be hoped, from moral wisdom schooled in concrete cases. Such questions constantly arise for persons having any large scope of governmental or managerial control, and for others having any influence over such persons. Even the weakest and dullest of us have to deal with them every election day.

In the author's paradigmatic field of medical ethics, organizational and economic issues of vast complexity are scarcely of less moral importance than clinical dilemmas, but the applicability to them of casuistry, in the authors' sense, is much more remote, while the need of reasoning upon trusted ethical principles is insistent and acute. Casuistry, in their sense, has more obvious and immediate bearing on "micro-ethics" than on "macro-ethics." And because of that greater obviousness and immediacy, casuists have often been insensitive to "macro-ethical" questions. In my own opinion, such insensitivity has been one of the saddest facts about Catholic moral theology throughout a great part of its history, whereas a renewed sensitization on that score is one of the happiest facts about its current phase. No such insensitivity is detectable in Jonsen and Toulmin, whereas their "case for casuistry" deserves attention from ethicists of every stripe.

The book's subtitle, "*A History of Moral Reasoning*," may raise false expectations. What it offers is a selection from certain philosophers and theologians of passages or themes that illustrate approaches to ethics that either tend or do not tend to "get down to cases." This eclecticism illustrates the authors' positions; it does not present a balanced or reliable history. The influence they attribute to Aristotle on Christian casuistry seems exaggerated in view of the abundance of Christian casuistry during thirteen centuries before Aristotle's rediscovery. The discussion of Pascal is seriously marred by a fundamental inconsistency, at first admitting that his satire may have attacked "just bad casuistry" and that "sometimes he seems to be writing from within the casuistical tradition," but afterwards simply asserting that "convinced that casuistry inevitably bred laxity, he repudiated it root and branch." The book's best historical sections deal with the casuistic modifications of moral views about usury, equivocation, and killing to avenge an insult. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 434)

When I was in journalism the rule was that we did not go on trips paid for by anyone—period. The thought of accepting a trip paid for by an interested party is mind-boggling. Human nature being what it is, we tend to spend more time on such a trip with the sponsors, we grow to like them, we see the reasonableness of their position a little more clearly. And that is why they spent the money to send us there. Which is precisely the reason responsible publications do not accept junkets, background trips, orientation tours, or whatever you wish to call them.

My reaction to your report? It portrays a hopeless situation and the status quo being maintained for perhaps years to come. And that, I am sure coincidentally, is precisely what the Israeli government is striving for. Since Israel holds all the cards in Gaza and the West Bank, blunting peace talks while settlements continue guarantees the success of the Big Israel plan.

But then, with all the injustices in this world, is the plight of the Palestinians that important? Probably not. I just wish my tax dollars weren't being used to enslave them.

JOSEPH D. POLICANO

Silence on Israel

San Diego, Calif.

To the Editors: Thanks for Margaret Steinfels's report on her visit to Israel ["Nothing's Simple," May 4]. The article contained a quality lacking in most such

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commentaries: hope. It gave me renewed confidence in the ability of the *best* side of Israel to prevail and eventually give full human rights to its oppressed Palestinian population.

The question I keep asking, however, is: Why does the American Catholic community remain virtually silent as our government enables the *worst* side of Israel (to the tune of $3 billion a year) to indulge in the human rights abuses you mentioned in your article? Our congressional lobbying groups and media opinion-makers are right to oppose apartheid in South Africa, military assistance to El Salvador, and *contra* violence in Nicaragua. Why are they then so silent about Israel, the largest single recipient of American foreign aid? Why do we Catholics remain quiet as the U.S. gives military assistance to a nation which possesses nuclear weapons and orbits satellites, and which boasts one of the most powerful air forces in the world?

PATRICK M. ARNOLD, S.J

The author replies:

In my view, all three correspondents make valid points but perhaps make too much of them:

Robert Snyder is right, up to a point; there are free and intense discussions in this country on the Middle East, but in Israel they seem to occur spontaneously, go on all the time, and enter the public realm; in the U.S. it takes enormous effort to mount the kinds of gatherings mentioned by our correspondent, and they then get little attention.

Joseph Policano offers a counsel of perfection that ignores some realities. "Responsible" publications that spurn opportunities for "junkets" enjoy sources of revenue denied to journals like *Commonweal*—advertising from General Electric and Exxon, for example—and media critics have argued that this circumstance affects the tunes the pipers choose to play. It's our practice to consider whether a given invitation respects our freedom to observe and therefore serves the interests of our readers.

I think Patrick Arnold misstates the case when he says the American Catholic community is "virtually silent" about U.S. policy toward Israel. The U.S. Catholic bishops issued a statement on the Middle East last fall (*Origins*, November 23, 1989) that deserves his attention. And this journal is only one of many that have been sharply critical, while taking note of factors in Israel's situation neglected by our correspondent.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS.

Keep it down

Morristown, N.J.

To the Editors: The glossary you supplied for Archbishop Weakland's letter [Correspondence, May 18] is far from complete. What about "pedal point," "cipher," "upper register," and "ground bass"?

MARTIN J. BURNE, O.S.B.

"Cipher" has a special meaning in music, but we haven't been able to decipher it. "Pedal point" is a note sustained while other parts change, and "ground bass" is a bass motif that keeps getting repeated while other harmonies and melodies change. In the "upper register" one squeaks; the lower is more like unto a rum-

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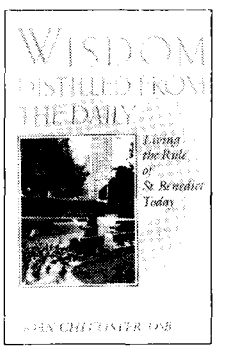

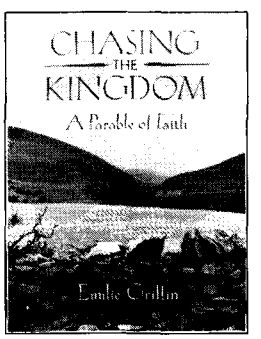

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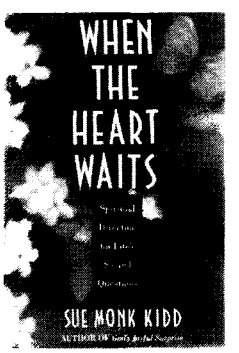

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ble. In the context of the whole letter, it becomes clear that the archbishop is a bass man, a rumbler. He takes the low road.

No official language

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: Abigail McCarthy ["A Common Currency," May 4] writes in a vacuum of political understanding as she concurs with Alistair Cooke, board member of U.S. English who would like to see the U.S. government legislate in favor of one official language for the United States.

In 1988 Linda Chavez, president of U.S. English, resigned after an Arizona newspaper published a memorandum from John Tanton, chair of that organization's board of directors, in which Tanton warned the people of the U.S. against Hispanics' high fertility rates and the possible impact of their Catholic affiliation on the separation of church and state in the United States. Walter Cronkite also resigned from the board.

The concept of English as the United States' official language was raised in recent years by Senator S.I. Hayakawa, who introduced it as a seemingly harmless resolution in the first immigration bill passed by the Senate in 1982. The resolution had no teeth of its own. But in the context of an exclusionist immigration policy unabashedly directed against Latin Americans, it was a symbolic snowball that started to roll. The rolling has received a lot of help from exclusionist groups such as the Federation of American Immigration Reform (FAIR), of which John Tanton, an ophthalmologist, is a founding member.

Latinos, Asians, and all other immigrants desire to learn English. Research shows that Spanish-speaking immigrants acquire English language skills at a rate comparable to that of any other immigrant group. If we also manage to retain our mother tongue, all the more power to us....

The United States is the fifth largest Hispanic country in the world, and it is going to be that no matter what the law says about official English.

There are many reasons why we should not want a homogeneous nation. Let Alistair Cooke be concerned about the coherence of the Empire. Let *Commonweal* celebrate not only the *unum*, but the *pluribus* of a just society.

AURORA CAMACHO DE SCHMIDT

English will survive

North Olmsted, Ohio

To the Editors: Many advocates of making English the official language of the U.S. come across as chauvinist or racist. Neither Abigail McCarthy nor Alistair Cooke, whose views McCarthy shares, could be accused of either. It is true that English has been a unifying force in this nation of immigrants and that those who do not learn English are condemned to second-class citizenship.

There is a question that the English-as-official-language people have never answered to my satisfaction. Who will define official English? The standard edited English which I have tried to speak and write as a college graduate is not the same as the Northern Appalachian dialect which I learned as a child. In my urban area, I find it almost impossible to understand some persons who speak what some linguists call Black English, or Australian English, or Caribbean English, or Mississippian, or Texan, or Bostonian; yet *they* think they speak English as well as I do.

Like most parents, I don't always understand every word my children say because this language is still growing and changing. The arts and sciences are constantly creating new words. The church is not far behind. Nouns are continually being turned into verbs so that we can "theologize" and perfectly good words fall out of favor so that the practice of ministry becomes "praxis." My aunt, a former missionary in Nigeria, would spend the first couple of weeks of her quadrennial furlough with a friend who would teach her how to understand a language that had changed radically in the previous four years.

There are days when I want the language-police to blow the whistle on what I hear and read. I want Congress to outlaw "hopefully," "irregardless," and other atrocities. Policing language inevitably means policing thought, however. The good news for Ms. McCarthy's and Mr. Cooke's legitimate concern about the unity of this country is that English can take care of itself: just ask the pastors and elderly members of any Slovenian, Armenian, Hungarian, or other ethnic parish what language their children speak.

It is true that in the Southwest and Florida, and in our largest cities, English is colliding with the equally dynamic Spanish language. The end result probably will not be a Quebec-styled language ghetto, but a new language which will prove that English is *numero uno*!

ROGER G. TALBOTT

The author replies:

Both these letters commenting on the column, "A Common Currency," make assumptions that are not substantiated by the column itself. The allegations made by Ms. Aurora Camacho de Schmidt are the most serious. She assumes that any support for making English the official language of the United States is necessarily anti-Hispanic. She also labels supporters, by implication, as exclusionist, fascist, and desirous of a homogeneous nation. In my own defense I wish to point out that I was the publisher of one of the first Spanish-language newspapers in the Washington, D.C., area, and am currently on the board of *El Pregonero*, the award-winning Spanish-language paper published here. I also serve on the board of the Chavez Foundation, which sponsors scholarships and research in honor of Senator Denis Chavez, the first U.S. senator of Hispanic origin.

My involvement in the needs of my Hispanic neighbors and my pride in the achievements of my Hispanic friends does not, however, alter my conviction that having one official language is unifying—especially in a country where the population is so diverse and composed of so many different language groups. That does not mean that I support any xenophobic views that may have been expressed by past or present officials of the organization U.S. English—views, I must confess, of which I was unaware and certainly deplore. Finally, Sra. de Schmidt's gibe about Alistair Cooke and the Empire seems to imply that he does not have equal status as a U.S. citizen or a right to his opinion.

Roger G. Talbott's assumption that making English our official language would mean that we would have to "police" it is,

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I think, unfounded. Making a language official does not freeze it or keep it from changing and growing. And the diversity of the dialects does not mean the language as it is taught and written is not understandable to everyone. The millions who watched the Tony Awards in this Year of the Actor must have been impressed by the contemporaneity of the centuries-old Shakespearean speeches which interspersed the program and were so beautifully delivered by actors of varied ethnic backgrounds. English has been a marvelously inclusive language and its vocabulary will no doubt be enriched in the future as it has been in the past—but it will still be English. ABIGAIL McCARTHY

'Currents' merging

New Rochelle, N.Y.

To the Editors: Thanks for linking *Cross Currents* with the London *Tablet* in your June 15 note on "historic anniversaries." Such generous support has been typical of *Commonweal* throughout our forty years, from our very first public notice in *Commonweal* (1951) via a write-up by John Cogley. Lest we get too nostalgic about our past, however, we ask for continued critical (but friendly) scrutiny for our "new" merged quarterly, *Cross Currents: Religion and Intellectual Life.* Joining forces with the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life not only enlarges our subscription list but allows us to draw on their distinguished advisory board to plan for a more interreligious thrust in future issues. JOE CUNNEEN

Blot that dot

San Francisco, Calif.

To the Editors: Why on earth do you use a period after "Ms"—as in the title to, and throughout "Prudent Ms. Prunskiene" [editorial, June 1]? "Ms" is not an abbreviation for missis (or missus, depending on your preference), nor is it a contraction of mistress or a shortened form of miss. That, after all, was the entire point behind the invention of "Ms" as a title....

DANIEL J. LEER

From the Editors: Our Bible in these matters is the American Heritage Dictionary, *a noninfallible source. It gives the nonirreformable opinion that both "Ms." and "Ms" are acceptable, and that the word itself is a "blend of Miss and Mrs."*

Illogic rules

Walnut Creek, Calif.

To the Editors: Re your comment, "Apparently, students could care less..." [April 6, page 205], please indicate whether the students are:

[ ] *minimally* indifferent (could care less);

[ ] *medially* indifferent (care less);

[ ] *maximally* indifferent (could not care less).

Also, "complexifying the matter" [page 203]: horrid neologism. Why not "complicating"? LEON LUKASZEWSKI

From the Editors: The students were maximally *indifferent. An essay on English usage published in our Bible (see above) contends that though "could care less" is illogical, it is not therefore to be stigmatized. As for our use of "complexifying," we were careless.*

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INTELLECTUALS AND RELIGION

Recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, among both professors and students, and amid inquisitive people generally, there is an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This interest is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious reawakening entail having any truck with Jimmy Swaggart's weird motel bills or Tammy Bakker's real-life impersonations of Imelda Marcos, or embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or America First. Nor does the religious renaissance imply a retreat from working for peace and justice. Rather, there is an awareness that, in the words of Jean Bethke Elshtain, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political commitments which are far more solid than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and the dangers of pseudo-scientific messianisms.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this "return to religion," and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual fascination with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments which result in progressive social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary riches offered by such greats as Ignazio Silone, Graham Greene, Thomas Merton, W.H. Auden, Flannery O'Connor, and T.S. Eliot.

An ecumenical and literary monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been characterized by the University of Chicago's Martin E. Marty as "lively" and by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky." And there's no denying the *Library Journal*'s verdict that we will "doubtless command increasing attention."

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